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Swedish minister visits Orient House

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Despite a standing protest by Israel, the foreign minister of Sweden met with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) top Jerusalem official Saturday at the organisation's headquarters in East Jerusalem. Swedish Foreign Minister Lena Hjelm Wallen ignored Israeli protests, saying the policy of her country on the subject had already been made clear. She did, however, wait until after concluding her official visit as a guest of Israel on Thursday before conducting the Israeli government by holding such meetings at the Orient House. "The Swedish government has a clear position regarding Jerusalem," Mrs. Wallen was quoted in a statement issued Saturday from the Orient House. Mrs. Wallen met there with Faisal Hussein, who is in charge of Jerusalem affairs for the Palestinian self-rule government in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

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Kabariti receives Bahraini greetings

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabariti on Saturday received Bahrain's Ambassador to Jordan Mohammad Ben Seif Al Musallam, who delivered to him a message of congratulations from Bahraini Prime Minister Sheikh Khalifah Bin Salman Al Khalifah on being appointed prime minister. Sheikh Khalifah wished Mr. Kabariti continued good health and happiness and the Jordanian people further progress and prosperity.

Early salary for civil servants

AMMAN (Petra) — Civil servants will receive their salaries for the month of February within the coming few days, Secretary General of the Ministry of Finance Suleiman Hafez Saturday announced. Mr. Hafez said the government will pay civil servants their salaries before the start of the Eid Al Fitr, the feast marking the end of the month of Ramadan, to enable them to prepare for the feast.

Mubarak in Jeddah

RIYADH (AFP) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak arrived in Saudi Arabia for a one-day visit to make a mini pilgrimage and meet officials, the official Saudi news agency (SPA) said. Mr. Mubarak was welcomed by several Saudi leaders including Foreign Minister Saud Al Faisal as he arrived at Jeddah airport. He will perform the "lesser pilgrimage" or "umra" to the Islamic holy city of Mecca and "meet with Saudi officials," Egyptian sources said earlier without providing details.

70 Sudanese jailed in Saudi Arabia

DUBAI (AFP) — More than 70 Sudanese have been detained in Saudi Arabia for setting up a unit of Sudan's ruling party the Islamic Front, a Sudanese diplomat in the Gulf said Saturday. "Seventy to 80 Sudanese workers were arrested for having formed in Saudi Arabia a cell of the Islamic Front," the diplomat said, who requested anonymity, told AFP. According to the diplomat, the Sudanese collected money for the Islamic Front and were arrested in recent days in Riyadh and the western Saudi city of Jeddah. "They were arrested for the needs of the investigation, and the Saudi authorities want to know the exact nature of their activities," according to the diplomat, who added that "no charges have yet to be filed against them." There is no time limit for holding people in custody in Saudi Arabia. The families of the Sudanese can visit them in prison, according to the diplomat, who said this indicated that "the affair is not serious."

China hopes for success in Iraq oil talks

BAGHDAD (AFP) — The Chinese ambassador to Baghdad said that China hoped for a positive outcome from the oil-for-food talks between the United Nations and Iraq, an official newspaper said Saturday. "China is closely following these negotiations and hopes they achieve positive results," Sun Bi Gan, the Chinese ambassador to Iraq, told the government newspaper Al Jumhuriya. The ambassador said China was "considering the efforts made by Iraq" to reach a "final lifting of the embargo and end the suffering of the Iraqi people," according to the newspaper. China is one of the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council. Along with France and Russia, it has expressed support for a lifting of the economic embargo imposed on Iraq for its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait, but run into stiff opposition from the United States and Britain.

King's Saudi visit seen as yet another reflection of Jordan's central role

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein's visit to Saudi Arabia today is aimed at cementing continuous efforts by Jordan to restore Arab unity and formulate a unified Islamic position on the challenges facing the region.

According to a senior Jordanian source, the visit comes within the context of continued Jordanian moves and the talks His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan has held with the leaders of Turkey and more recently Morocco are part of the central role that Jordan is assuming in the region.

The comment by the source, who preferred anonymity, appeared to be aimed at reaffirming the Jordanian position amid lingering assertions that the role assumed by the Kingdom was far more significant than its physical size in the region.

Jordan has rejected such assertions, pointing out that the size of a country or its population strength has never figured high in its political strength in terms of interna-

Kabariti and Parliament members in delegation

THE DELEGATION that will accompany His Majesty King Hussein on his visit to Saudi Arabia today will include Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, Royal Court Chief Awn Khasawneh, Post and Telecommunications Minister Jamal Sarairoh and Minister of

State for Foreign Affairs Khaled Madadha as well as parliamentary team including Upper House of Parliament members Abdul Latif Arabiyat and Ghazi Shbailat and Lower House members Hamzeh Mansour, Abdul Majid Aqtash, Hatem Ghazawi and Anwar Hadid.

tional diplomacy and the key role it could play as an influential force in shaping the region where it exists.

The source said the Jordanian contacts on the regional and Arab level "crystallise clearly Jordan's central role in the region and confirm the Arab pivot from which Jordan's Middle Eastern outlook emanates."

Jordan's priorities at this point in time amid the fast-moving changes in the region are the "crucial issues of the final status of Jerusalem, the water crisis (in the Middle

East as a whole), the situation in Iraq and regional cooperation," said the source.

King Hussein's talks with King Fahd of Saudi Arabia today "finally dispel the misconceptions that have plagued the relations between the two fraternal countries since the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait," said the source, referring to the Saudi perception in 1990 that Jordan had supported the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

The talks between the Jordanian and Saudi

monarchs, the source said, "will highlight the common concern felt by two leaders regarding the endless suffering of the Iraqi people as well as the need to maintain the territorial unity and integrity of Iraq."

The source noted that both King Hussein and King Fahd "have expressed, over a long period of time, the necessity of a united Arab and Islamic position in order to preserve the universally inclusive character of Jerusalem."

Also within the context of Jordan's regional role was the focus of the recent visit paid by Crown Prince Hassan to Turkey and the talks he held with Turkish President Suleiman Demirel, said the source, who described the Crown Prince's efforts as complementing those of King Hussein.

He said the Crown Prince discussed with President Demirel "the need of holding a water conference in the region and expressed Jordan's willingness to host such a

(Continued on page 7)

Jordan not involved in any effort to topple Iraqi regime — Muasher

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan on Saturday denied that it was involved in efforts to topple the Iraqi regime but expressed hopes that relations with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait will improve.

"Jordan does not have any plans to topple any of the regimes in the region. What is of interest to us is the unity of Iraq and alleviating the suffering of the Iraqi people," Marwan Muasher, minister of information, told reporters after a Cabinet meeting.

"We have always insisted on and called for the unity of Iraq," added Dr. Muasher. He was replying to a question on statements made by U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry that the U.S. was cooperating with Jordan and other Mideastern countries in

the region to topple the Iraqi regime.

Dr. Muasher said Jordan pins great hope on His Majesty King Hussein's visit to Saudi Arabia today and expressed hopes that relations between Jordan and Kuwait will also see progress.

"This visit crowns continuous efforts to improve relations" since ties were strained by the Gulf crisis in 1991, Dr. Muasher said. "It is high time that cooperation be enhanced."

The King is expected to meet with King Fahd of Saudi Arabia in Mecca. The King will also visit Egypt at the end of next week, the minister said.

Dr. Muasher said Jordan hopes that undergoing contacts with Kuwait will be fruitful in improving ties between the two countries.

"We don't want to jump into conclusions. But there

are contacts and there are messages," he said.

The minister also announced that the Cabinet on Saturday decided on the formation of four ministerial committees. They are: The judiciary committee headed by Minister of Justice Abdul Karim Dughni, the Development Committee headed by Minister of Higher Education Abdullah Nsour, the Public Affairs Committee headed by Minister of Interior Awad Khleifat, and Inspection and Control Committee headed by Minister of Construction and Public Works Abdul Hadi Majali.

"The control committee is a new one. It is formed in line with the government's policy of fighting corruption," Dr. Muasher said.

Kabariti urges 2-month reserves of fuel; Premier pledges cooperation with Senate, page 3

Syria, Iraq seek united stand in water dispute with Turkey

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Iraqi and Syrian experts began ground-breaking talks here on Saturday aimed at hammering out a joint stand in a dispute with Turkey over the precious waters of the Euphrates River.

The five days of talks between the two long-time Arab rivals were to "coordinate the positions on Iraq and Syria over the waters of the Euphrates and the Tigris," the head of the Iraqi delegation, Abdul Sattar Salman Hussein, told AFP.

"We will look at the technical aspects as well as the issue of the pollution of the Euphrates' waters," he said, before going into talks which gathered officials and experts from the two foreign and irrigation ministries.

"This is a technical meeting, which is part of the bilateral meetings on common waters," added Syrian delegation member and water expert Abdul Aziz Al Masri. The meeting came after Iraqi overtures to Syria, even though the two broke diplomatic ties in 1981 and are governed by rival branches of the Baath Party. Both countries have ac-

cused Turkey, where the Euphrates rises, of meddling with the waters and ignoring their needs. The two suffer from hot, dry summers and the river waters are vital for irrigating crops.

A main bone of contention is a \$30 billion Turkish project, known as GAP, to build 22 dams and 19 hydroelectric power stations along the river in southeast Anatolia.

Syria and Iraq have both voiced concern at the project saying it would cut the flow of waters into their territory. Iraq has charged that since the Ataturk dam was completed in 1992 the river's flow has dropped by half.

Damascus also sent a memorandum to the Arab League in December condemning the "negative effects on the environment and health in Syria because of the salinity of drainage waters" discharged into the Euphrates.

The two countries want to set up a system of quotas for a fair sharing of the waters, worked out according to their needs.

Ankara has said it would agree to a meeting of foreign ministers to discuss the river

once a new government has been set up in Turkey.

Under a protocol signed in 1987, Turkey has to ensure a flow of 500 cubic metres per second into Syria, which then supplies 58 per cent of this water to Iraq.

The 2,800 kilometre-long river flows into Syria after rising in Turkey, and then travels into Iraq. The Tigris, which also rises in Turkey, is further to the east and flows solely into Iraq. The two rivers then join in southern Iraq to form the Shatt-Al Arab.

"The meeting by itself is a sign of some kind of better climate in Syrian-Iraqi ties but I do not expect any radical policy change in relations at present," said one Damascus-based Arab diplomat.

Syria backed Iran in its eight-year-old war with Iraq which ended in 1988 and joined a U.S.-led multinational coalition. Which drove Iraqi forces from Kuwait in 1991.

Munib Al Rifai, head of the legal department at the

(Continued on page 7)

Likud ready to accept May 28 elections

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel's main opposition Likud party said on Saturday it could accept a May 28 date for early elections, smoothing the way for Prime Minister Shimon Peres' expected announcement next week calling an early poll.

Likud parliamentary faction head Moshe Katsav, asked by Israel's army radio in a joint interview with his Labour counterpart if Likud would accept May 28 elections, said: "Certainly, yes."

Diplomatic sources said this week that Mr. Peres, leading in opinion polls since the November assassination of his predecessor Yitzhak Rabin by a right-wing Jew, had told visiting U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher he wanted elections on May 28. This would bring the date forward from October.

It is customary for the ruling party, in this case Labour, to consult all other factions on the election date, which must be set by legislation. Labour, its coalition partner Meretz and two small Arab-dominated parties that support the government from outside command 61 votes in the 120-seat parliament to 53 for Likud and its supporters.

The orthodox Jewish Shas Party holds six seats and has variously aligned with Labour and Likud when it chose. But before Labour can exercise its slim majority, a bill on early elections has to pass parliamentary hurdles like the law committee where Likud, if it chose, could try delaying tactics.

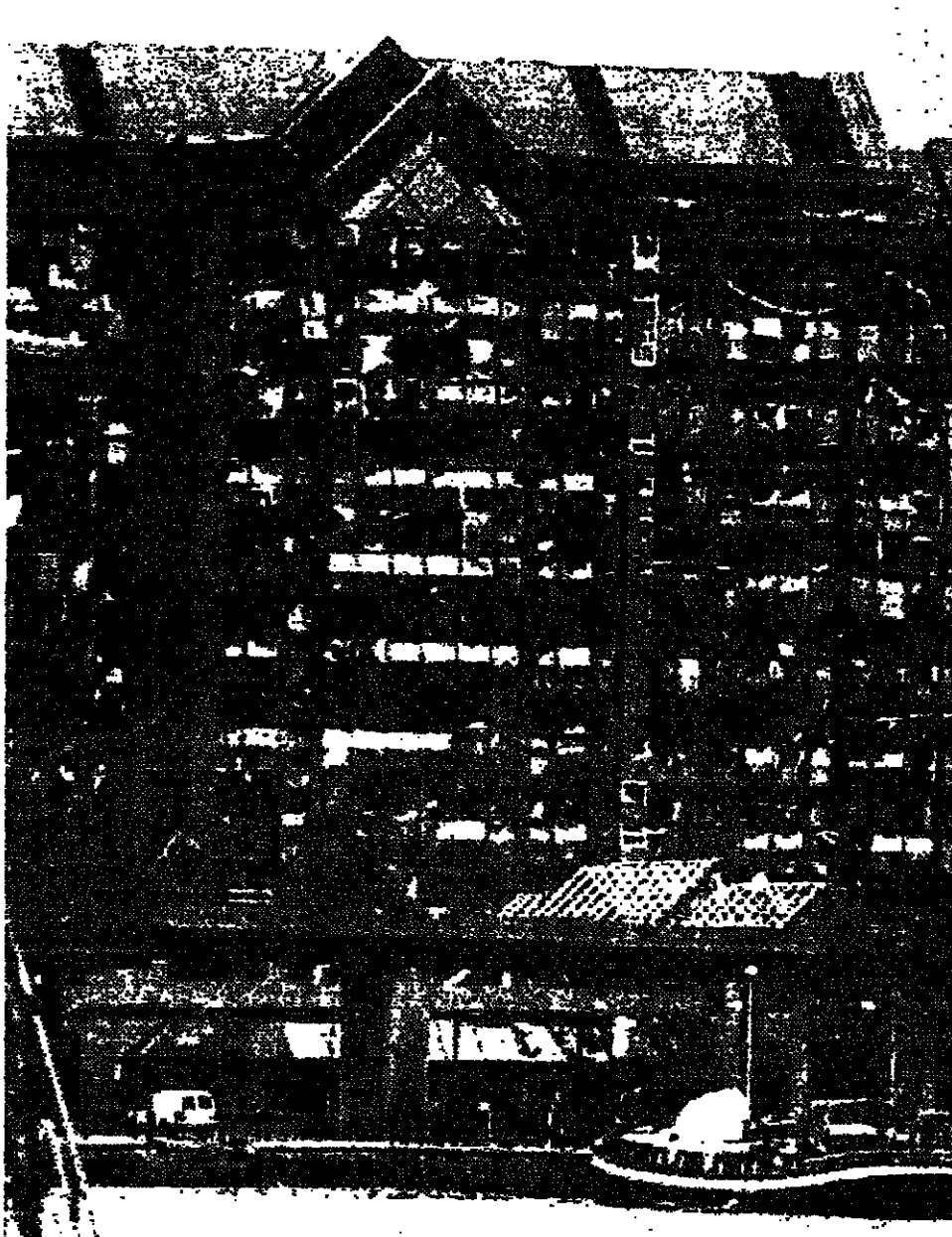
Mr. Peres has said publicly he would announce his decision next week. It is widely expected he will do so on Sunday. Mr. Katsav emphasised that his party would make a formal decision only after Mr. Peres had made his announcement.

Some in Israel have suggested that during the campaign the pace of peace talks with Syria, which picked up after Mr. Rabin's killing, could slow. Four years of talks have stalled over an

(Continued on page 7)

Fresh unrest, arrests in Bahrain

MANAMA (R) — Bahrain said it had arrested an undisclosed number of people accused of fresh arson attacks in several Shiite Muslim villages. An interior ministry official, quoted by the Gulf news agency late Friday night, said protesters had set fire to five power transformers, four power pylons, three private cars and a tailor's shop. "Security forces took all necessary steps to ensure security arrangements in these areas and started investigations to round up the perpetrators and bring them to justice," he said. They have also foiled an attempt to set a house in Ma'amir (village) ablaze and arrested the perpetrators," he added. The official did not say how many people were arrested but the ministry said earlier this month it was holding around 600 people in connection with anti-government unrest. Eight opposition leaders are among those detained, including Sheikh Abdul Amir Al Jamri, a former member of parliament. Ahmad Al Shamlan, a prominent Sunni lawyer, poet and writer was also arrested on Tuesday.



A building at Canary Wharf in London's East End stands without windows following a bomb attack Friday evening which ripped through the office district injuring some 100 people (Reuters photo)

Major, Bruton demand IRA denounce violence after blast

LONDON (Agencies) — Prime Minister John Major and his Irish counterpart John Bruton Saturday implored the Irish Republican Army (IRA) to renounce violence as the dust settled from an IRA car bomb in London that ended a 17-month truce and plunged Northern Ireland back into political chaos.

"The IRA and Sinn Fein (the IRA's political wing) must say now that their campaign of violence has stopped and they will never resume it again," the British premier said in a statement 20 hours after the bomb that killed one person and injured more than 100.

The Irish government's call for the reinstatement of the ceasefire came after a day of cabinet-level meetings.

Mr. Major vowed to "carry on the search for peace with the Irish government and the democratic political parties." Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams, who claimed he had no prior knowledge of the Friday night bomb, earlier Saturday had called for "urgent talks" with Britain and Ireland.

Mr. Major's office said the request was "under consideration."

Dublin said it would not meet Mr. Adams — who has

refused to condemn the bombing — until the ceasefire was reinstated.

Political leaders in Washington, London, Belfast and Dublin reeled in shock Saturday and appealed for calm after the car bomb, which followed by one hour an IRA announcement that its ceasefire was over.

Mr. Bruton and Mr. Major both conferred by phone with U.S. President Bill Clinton overnight.

In Washington, Mr. Clinton, a major behind-the-scenes player in the peace process, seemed shattered at news of the bombing.

He said he was "deeply concerned" over the end of the IRA ceasefire, which he had lauded during his historic pre-Christmas visit to Northern Ireland last year.

"This attack was aimed at the growing prospects for peace, a just and lasting peace in Northern Ireland," said Mr. Clinton, who told reporters he was "deeply concerned" about the abrupt end to the ceasefire.

A bomb in an underground parking garage on Friday night devastated a London office and apartment complex and shattered a ceasefire the IRA said it would not longer honour.

Noting the groundswell of support for a permanent peace that he encountered in December when he became the first American president to visit Northern Ireland, Mr. Clinton said the chance for peace must not be allowed to die.

"We must not turn away from that path now," he said. "I know that the overwhelming majority of the people of Northern Ireland, Catholic and Protestant alike, want to stay on the path to peace."

Irish Foreign Minister Dick Spring, on a plane over the Atlantic returning from Washington when the bomb went off, arrived back in Dublin in a dark mood.

The attack, he said, raised questions about Adams' authority in the nationalist movement.

In Belfast, Seamus Mallon, deputy head of the moderate Catholic Social Democratic and Labour Party, said the bombing posed a stark choice between a return to violence and a continued painstaking search for peace.

But David Trimble, head of the main pro-British party, the Ulster Unionist Party, said, "I think we have to take it that Mr. Gerry Adams and

(Continued on page 7)

U.S.: Russia still backs Iraq sanctions

HELSINKI (R) — Russia has told U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher it will support continued sanctions on Iraq, despite a reported new oil deal between Moscow and Baghdad, U.S. officials said on Saturday.

Mr. Christopher, after talks with the new Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov, told reporters: "My understanding is that that (oil) contract ... is explicitly contingent on Iraq satisfying the U.N. resolutions and being out from under the oil sanctions."

U.S. officials said Mr. Primakov did not specifically confirm the deal with Iraq, which was reported on Thursday by Iraq's official Al Qadisiya newspaper and which some sources said was worth \$10 billion.

But State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns

said when Mr. Christopher raised the topic, Mr. Primakov "agreed sanctions should be maintained on Iraq because ... the Iraqis have cheated on issues (U.N. investigations) are looking into."

Mr. Primakov himself refused to answer a question about Iraq during a news conference with Mr. Christopher. An Arab specialist, he has close ties to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and tried during the runup to the 1991 Gulf war to avoid a military clash between Baghdad and a U.S.-led international coalition.

Mr. Christopher said Mr. Primakov "emphasised that he's going to be relying very heavily on Mr. (Rolf) Ekeus (head of the U.N. investigative team on Iraq) and the Ekeus reports and until there is full compliance on the mass destruction issue ... Russia

would not be proceeding to support a lifting of the oil sanctions."

"If there is such an agreement (between Russia and Iraq) it certainly is contingent on lifting the oil sanctions," Mr. Christopher said. Mr. Burns added: "The Russians made very clear this is a deal for the future."

But Mr. Burns said the United States and Russia continued to disagree over just when sanctions should be lifted.

"Moscow believes Iraq must only meet U.N. demands to destroy its weapons of mass destruction."

Washington insists Iraq fulfil other U.N. resolutions, as well, including stopping its repression of its minorities, and releasing some 660 Kuwaitis who disappeared during the Gulf crisis.

Carbomb kills 6 in Algeria; FIS disowns Haddam call

PARIS (R) — A car bomb exploded outside a police station in Algiers this week, killing at least six people and wounding 30 others, an Algerian newspaper said on Saturday.

The bomb went off on Thursday outside a police station at Miliana town, 110 kilometres southeast of Algiers, the French-language daily *Liberte* said.

There was no reported claim of the bomb attack, the latest in a string of bombings blamed by the authorities on guerrillas staging a four-year-old violent campaign against the military-backed government.

A car bomb exploded outside a hospital on Monday, killing five people and wounding 22 others in Ain Bessam, 90 kilometres of the Algiers.

The reported escalation of violence this week coincided with an apparent rift between exiled Islamist leaders on ways to start a dialogue with the authorities to resolve the crisis.

The mainstream leadership of the country's banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) in exile disowned on Friday a peace initiative by the head of the party's elected parliamentarians, Anwar Haddam.

Mr. Haddam, who has headed a FIS office in Washington since the Algerian authorities cancelled a general election in 1992, announced in Stockholm on Thursday that he and two other FIS officials would travel to Algeria to meet jailed Muslim leaders.

But the mainstream FIS leadership, headed by German-based Rabah Kebir, said in a statement: "Mr. Anwar Haddam does not represent anyone and has no... political influence inside or outside the country. His positions and statements reflect only his personal views."

The FIS leadership ascribed Mr. Haddam's initiative to "personal ambition" but reaffirmed its own willingness to achieve a negotiated political solution on the basis of letters sent by the imprisoned leaders to President Lamine Zeroual.

An estimated 40,000 people have been killed so far in Algeria's civil strife, Mr. Zeroual, who won the country's first plural presidential elections, pledged dialogue with opposition parties and clemency for grass-roots guerrillas but vowed to squash the fundamentalist rebels.

Mr. Haddam said he planned to travel to Algiers with exiled FIS leaders Sheikh Ahmad Zaoui and Rashid Cherif. All three have been regarded as close to the radical Islamic Armed Group (GIA), a hardline breakaway movement from the FIS.

He declined to say when the group would travel but called on Algiers to ensure that the delegation could meet FIS President Abbas Madani and FIS Vice-President Ali Belhadj "to discuss the implementation of (measures) that must precede true negotiations."

In the most detailed

account of the organisation's leadership structure, the statement listed four institutions which it said were empowered to represent FIS policy.

— Jailed leaders Madani, Belhadj and Abdul Kader Hachani.

— Released leaders Ali Djeddi, Abdul Kader Bouhamkham, Kamel Guermazi and Abdul Kader Omar.

— The command of the Islamic Salvation Army led by Madani Mezzerag.

— The FIS executive in exile led by Mr. Kebir.

French officials say they believe Mr. Zeroual's entourage are holding contacts with the jailed FIS leaders, with a view to staging parliamentary elections later this year.

This week's public row among Islamic leaders was a strange reversal of the situation after Mr. Zeroual won the presidential election boycotted by the Islamic opposition last November.

At that time, Mr. Kebir called Mr. Zeroual's election legitimate and offered to negotiate with him, while Mr. Haddam called the poll a fraud and denounced any talks with the "military junta."

Mr. Zeroual pledged to continue seeking dialogue with the opposition to try to end the violence after winning a big majority on an impressive turnout in November.

But he has taken only timid steps, appointing a handful of moderate Islamic figures to a government of technocrats.

Perry says U.S. will increase its military presence in Gulf

MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE (R) — The United States plans to increase its military presence in the Middle East to counter the "growing threat" from Iraq and Iran, U.S. Defence Secretary of State William Perry said on Friday.

During a visit to U.S. Central Command headquarters at Macdill Air Force base in Tampa, Mr. Perry called Iraq and Iran "the biggest threats to stability in the Middle East."

He said he had received recommendations from the Central Command commander to build a U.S. presence and to increase the prepositioning of U.S. troops and supplies to ease U.S. access to the region.

"I expect to act on a good many of these recommendations when I get back to Washington," Mr. Perry

said. He gave no specifics on troop strength or movements. Central command oversees U.S. military action in the region.

Mr. Perry said there was no immediate threat from either Iraq or Iran but that he was worried "over the long term about both nations making further advancements in nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and the ability to deliver them."

On Bosnia, Mr. Perry said he believes that the Dayton accord will stand but added, "all three signatories must comply with the agreement. As we come to pitholes in the road, as we have in the last day or two, we will ride over those pitholes and overcome those problems."

Mr. Perry said he looks forward to the U.S. military having a more traditional relationship with Haiti once

peacekeepers leave in mid-March.

"U.S. troops will be involved in road repair, bridge building, and improving utilities that will be very useful to the Haitians," Mr. Perry said.

In Tehran, Louis Farrakhan, the black American Muslim leader, on Saturday ridiculed covert operations planned by the United States against Iran, saying his country would never defeat a "divinely-inspired" government.

Mr. Farrakhan, who arrived Saturday to take part in a ceremony marking the 17th anniversary of the 1979 Islamic revolution on Sunday, praised Iran as the world's "only religious country governed by the law of God."

"The United States cannot

(Continued on page 7)

Group urges Israel to release Palestinian women detainees

AMMAN (J.T.) — In the current euphoric atmosphere of Palestinian-Israeli relations in the wake of the "Oslo Two" agreement, Israeli troop withdrawal from West Bank population centres, and Palestinian democratic elections, the fate of one small group of individuals has been overlooked. They are the 29 women political prisoners still being held in Israel, the London-based *Canal for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding* (CAABU) noted in a press release.

One of the stipulations of the second Oslo agreement of October 1995 was that all Palestinian female prisoners and detainees would be released as part of the first group of pardoned prisoners. The first release took place on Oct. 8, but five of the women prisoners were refused pardon — one by the president and four by a high-ranking military officer. As a result, the women who were to be released refused the pardon because it failed to include all female prisoners and therefore violated the

terms of the agreement. On Jan. 10, the 29 women — who remain in Hasharon prison — barricaded themselves into two cells. They demand that all of them without exception should be released.

Conditions inside the two small cells, as one might imagine, are cramped and increasingly uncomfortable. The women have refused to come out — for exercise or for any other reason — and have refused to open the door to receive their meals. The prison authorities will not allow lawyers or other visitors to approach the cells so it is impossible to ascertain the exact state of the women's health. But it is safe to assume that, after three weeks of hunger strike, their situation must be close to crisis point.

It is essential that the Israelis — in line with the spirit of peace and improved relations — be pressed to honour the agreement signed by their leaders and release all the Palestinian women prisoners without further delay.

New Egyptian law designed to curb lawsuits against artists

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt will consider a new law aimed at curbing rampant lawsuits against intellectuals which rights groups say Islamic fundamentalists use to suppress freedom of expression, newspapers said on Saturday.

The justice ministry is preparing the law which controls "direct claim" suits to "prevent their misuse in terrorism intellectuals" and "punish those who file false suits," the government daily *Al-Akhar* said.

Direct claims bypass prosecutors, allowing plaintiffs to take artists, writers and journalists directly to court for their works.

The law being prepared would forbid "direct claims for crimes involving publishing" unless filed through public prosecutors, who would then consider whether to pursue them, the paper said.

It would also set punishment "for those who misuse direct claims by charging them with perjury if the innocence of the defendant is proven," it said.

The law also frees public prosecutors to raise suit "to protect society, its values and

honour in the case of crimes of adultery and licentious acts," the paper said.

About 50 intellectuals and artists were taken to court in 1995 using direct claim, the Centre for Human Rights Legal Aid (CHRLA) said in a report on Wednesday.

Most prominent is the case against the Egyptian actress Yusra, who fundamentalist lawyers took to court on a morals charge after she appeared on a magazine cover in a revealing bodice.

Direct claim is one of two tools Islamist lawyers have used to silence writers and intellectuals with accusations of apostasy and offending Islam, CHRLA said.

Similar legislation passed in January put public prosecutors in charge of the second tool, the Islamic law concept of "heshba," which allows any Muslim to raise suit "to protect Islam."

Lawyers had used heshba to win a court case last July declaring university professor Nasser Abu Zeid a heretic and ordering his divorce from his wife on the grounds that a Muslim cannot be married to an apostate.

Manila calls for Ramadan amnesty for maid in UAE

DUBAI (AFP) — The Philippine embassy on Saturday said it has urged the United Arab Emirates to release Filipina maid Sarah Balabagan, jailed for killing her employer, in an amnesty to mark the end of the Holy Month of Ramadan.

"Ambassador Roy Seneres last week reiterated a clemency appeal for Filipino prisoners, mentioning Sarah in particular, on the occasion of Eid Al Fitr, Labour Attache Danilo Cruz told AFP.

"We are hopeful," he added. The 'Eid Al Fitr feast, which marks the end of the fasting month of Ramadan, will begin this year on Feb. 19 or 20.

The foreign department in Manila on Thursday said Ms. Balabagan, herself a Muslim, has been already whipped 100 times as punishment for killing her employer, receiving 20 lashings a day for five days from Jan. 20.

A diplomatic row between the Philippines and the UAE was narrowly averted in October last year after UAE President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahyan convinced the family of Ms. Balabagan's employer, Mohammad Al Balushi, to drop demands for the death sentence against her.

Ms. Balabagan had earlier been convicted of murder. However, an Islamic appeals court ordered that Ms. Balabagan, a Filipino Muslim, be imprisoned for a year and whipped 100 times, and that she pay \$41,000 in blood money to the Balushis.

Ms. Balabagan said she killed her employer in self-defence after being sexually assaulted. In Cotabato, Philippines, the parents of Sarah Balabagan joined in appealing to Sheikh Zayed for their daughter to be pardoned.

The parents expressed joy over radio reports that Ms. Balabagan, had undergone all 100 lashings that she was sentenced to receive.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Five British teens lost in Cyprus

NICOSIA (AP) — British and Cypriot forces, backed by at least one helicopter, searched the Troodos mountains Friday night for five missing teenagers from a British air force base who apparently got lost during an adventure outing, police reported. The search began after the five youngsters, all aged around 15, failed to return from an outing for 30 children from the Royal Air Force base at Akrotiri on the south of this island, a police spokesman told the Association Press. At least one Wessex helicopter from the search-and-rescue squadron based at Akrotiri, one of two sovereign base areas the British maintain on Cyprus, was scrambled to aid search teams of Cypriot police and national guardsmen. British officials at Akrotiri were not available for comment. But Cypriot police officials said more military personnel were expected to widen the search in the rugged mountains in the centre of the island. At this time of the year, temperatures in the heavily wooded Troodos range are usually freezing at night. No details were available on the missing youngsters, who were not identified.

Russian academy to train Iraqi oil experts

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russia's Gubkin oil and gas academy is to train top-level Iraqi oil experts under an accord signed with Baghdad's higher education ministry, the Interfax news agency reported Friday. Iraqi students would come to Moscow and Russian instructors would go to Iraq under the accord, which academy deputy head Oleg Korolov stressed had been signed by the two bodies concerned, and not by Russia and Iraq. Iraqi oil is under an international embargo as part of measures taken against Baghdad in the wake of the Gulf war.

Eritrean president to visit Egypt

CAIRO (AFP) — Eritrean President Isaias Afewerki will visit Cairo on Sunday for talks with his Egyptian counterpart Hosni Mubarak on his country's dispute with Yemen over a Red Sea archipelago, officials said. Mr. Afewerki's visit will last a day or two, officials at the Egyptian presidency said. Cairo has mediated between Asmara and Sanaa after Ethiopia captured the island of Hanish Al Kabir in December, one of a string of strategic islands at the mouth of the Red Sea claimed by both countries. Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh said Thursday that French mediators had put forward a "draft accord" to solve the crisis by resolving maritime borders in the Red Sea.

Iranian asylum-seeker kidnapped

BONN (AFP) — An Iranian asylum-seeker was recovering in hospital Saturday after allegedly being kidnapped by compatriots and tortured in a cellar for two days until he managed to escape. The 28-year-old man told police he was seized by four armed men when he was on his way home to Cologne from another Iranian friend's house at Hennef, near Bonn. Severely mistreated, he had only managed to escape when he was being taken from his prison to another place, he told police, who called on the public for information to assist in their inquiries. The Iranian opposition Mujahadeen-e-Khalq said the man was a "turncoat" but denied responsibility for his kidnapping.

Pollution scare after tanker sinks

ATHENS (AFP) — A Panamanian-flagged oil tanker sank with all 18 hands off southern Greece late Friday, raising fears of serious pollution, the Greek shipping ministry said. The ministry said that an air-and-sea search for the 5,000 tonne *Kyra* after a distress message had found only two upturned lifeboats. Searches were continuing in the Ionian Sea off Kiparissia in the southwest Peloponnese, amid driving rain, heavy seas and winds of force six, the ministry said. Greek and foreign merchant vessels in the area went to the scene after the distress message was heard around 1900 GMT, along with tugs and helicopters. The *Kyra*, which had been in service for 22 years, was fully laden and on its way to Turkey when it disappeared.

Juppe plants olive tree in Rabin's memory

BORDEAUX, France (R) — French Prime Minister Alain Juppe honoured the memory of slain Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on Friday by planting an olive tree in the garden of the Bordeaux city hall. "I was deeply, strongly and sincerely moved when I learned of Yitzhak Rabin's assassination... because over the course of our meetings, he became a personal friend," Mr. Juppe said at a ceremony in the southwestern city which he serves as mayor. "Yitzhak Rabin's true victory, the victory which will go down in history, will be peace. I want this tree to bear witness to this," said the premier, speaking in the presence of Israeli Ambassador to France Avi Pazner.

'Iran Sunni cleric dead after arrest'

NICOSIA (R) — The body of an Iranian Sunni Muslim cleric accused of having ties with Saudi Arabia has been found in southern Iran days after he was held by security officials, relatives and opposition sources said on Friday. "Molavi Ahmad Sayyad was arrested at the Bandar Abbas airport on Jan. 28 and we are told his body was found outside the city five days later," said Ali Akbar Mollazadeh, an Iranian Sunni activist living in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). "Sayyad had visited the UAE for about six weeks, partly to raise funds for his Islamic theology school where he taught fellow Baluchis in Iran," Mr. Mollazadeh told Reuters by telephone from Sharjah in the UAE. Iran, which is 90 per cent Shiite, has often blamed unrest in its Sunni-populated regions in the southeast on groups allegedly backed by Saudi Arabia.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 77311-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:00 The Flintstones
14:30 Disney's Aladdin
15:00 Family Playhouse
15:25 Pugsley's Summer
15:50 Islamic History in Jordan
16:10 Drama - Olavango
17:00 Duc - Montaigne
17:30
Scrie - Les Compagnons De L'Adventure
18:00 Magazine - Envoye Special
19:00 News in French
19:15
Magazine - Sports Et Musique
19:30 News Headlines
19:35
Comedy - Keeping Up Appearances
20:00 Duc - Oriental Rugs
20:30 Hawaii Five-0 (drama)
21:25
Duc - Women of the World
22:00 News in English
22:35 Comenaric
23:15 The American Chart Show
23:59 Series - Stay Lucky

PRAYER TIMES

05:00 Fair
06:00 (Sunrise) Doha
11:50 Dhah
14:54 'Asr
17:21 Maghrib
18:40 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swifeth, Tel. 810740
632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel.
637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Ternassia Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel.
623541
Anglican Church Tel. 62626
Armenian Catholic Church Tel.
771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel.
775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel.
62326
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel.
624326
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 650932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 624901
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology:
Under the effect of a cold air front affecting the Kingdom, rainy and cloudy weather conditions will prevail with temperatures dropping significantly and winds westerly active.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

In Aqaba, skies will be partly cloudy with a chance for showers. Winds will be northerly active and seas choppy.
Min./Max. temp.
Amman 4 / 11
Aqaba 9 / 19
Deserts 3 / 11
Jordan Valley 8 / 18
NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Mazin Al-Nahli 830435
Dr. Fawzi Al-Dabbas 759155
Dr. Nidal Al-Asad 751622
Dr. Wafiq Qudus 893542
Al-Asema pharmacy 661912
Firdaws pharmacy 778336
Al-Salam pharmacy 637055
Nairokh pharmacy 636732
Al-Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shimani pharmacy 637660
Nairokh pharmacy 626762
Nairokh pharmacy 626762
JIRID:
Dr. Ahmad Qanu 281741
Al-qub pharmacy 985417
ZANAGAS:
Dr. Akram Haddad 985580
Khalid pharmacy 985417
EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Intermediate 661111
Civil Defence Emergency 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Fire Brigade 617001
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 196398
Public Security Department 630323
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Queen's Calls 910230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636361
RJ Flight Information 985330
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 985330
Akileh Maternity, J. Amn. 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Muthana, J. Amman 636140
Palestine Shmichani 617071
Shmichani Hospital 689131
University Hospital 845045
Al-Musharraf Hospital 66727/9
The Islamic, Abdali 661046
Italian, Al-Muhajra 771013
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775112/6
Queen, Marka 891611/5
Queen Alia Hospital 642402/0
Amal Hospital 647155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital 899433/3
Zarqa Central Hospital 899433/3
Jin Sino Hospital 899433/3
Al-Hima Modern Hospital 899433/3
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 965199
IBRID:
Princess Basma Hospital 892755/5
Greek Catholic Hospital 892725/5
Jin Al-Nafes Hospital 892725/5
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital 893141/11
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia Intl.

International Airport Tel. (06)53240-5, where it should always be verified.
ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
05:30 Bangkok (RJ)
07:20 Aqaba (RJ)
07:20 Jeddah (RJ)
07:20 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
08:25 Larnaca (RJ)
09:20 Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)
09:25 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:05 Athens, Greece (RJ)
10:05 Brno, Czech Rep. (RJ)
10:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:00 Brussels, Paris (RJ)
17:45 London (RJ)
18:25 Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
18:25 Athens (RJ)
18:45 Frankfurt (RJ)
19:35 Rome (RJ)
19:40 Vienna (RJ)
06:10 Cairo (RJ)
Royal Wings (RW) Flights (Marka Airport)
21:25 Aqaba (RW)
22:25 Aqaba (RW)
Other Flights (Terminal 2)
18:30 Sanaa (Y)
12:40 Sharjah, Bahrain (GF)
14:00 Doha (Q)
14:30 Moscow (SU)
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia Intl.

20:10 Beirut (ME)
20:20 Cairo (MS)
23:10 Istanbul (TK)
23:59 London, Beirut (BA)
01:25 Amsterdam (KL)
DEPARTURES
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
05:30 Aqaba (RJ)
06:15 Beirut (RJ)
08:50 Vienna (RJ)
11:00 Frankfurt (RJ)
11:15 Rome (RJ)
11:25 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
11:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:15 Athens (RJ)
20:10 Cairo, Dubai (RJ)
20:20 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
20:25 New Delhi (RJ)
20:45 Jeddah (RJ)
20:45 Damascus (RJ)
22:45 Singapore, Jakarta (RJ)
22:45 Bangkok (RJ)
22:45 Sanaa (RJ)
Royal Wings (RW) Flights (Marka Airport)
07:00 Aqaba (RW)
08:00 Aqaba (RW)
Other flights (Terminal 2)
07:45 Beirut (ME)
11:30 Sanaa (Y)
12:40 Doha (Q)
15:00 Dhah (Q)
16:05 Moscow (SU)
16:05 Cairo (MS)
02:25 Amsterdam (KL)
HUJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN
Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday
MARKET PRICES
Upper-lower price in fils per kg.
Apple 700 / 500
Banana 620 / 350
Banana (Mukammal) 550 / 550
Banana (imported) 850 / 850
Cabbage 70 / 40
Carrot 180 / 100
Cauliflower 180 / 100
Cucumbers (large) 150 / 100
Cucumbers (small) 200 / 100
Eggplant 220 / 150
Garlic 100 / 100
Grape Fruit 220 / 120
Lemon 400 / 250
Marrow (large) 150 / 80
Marrow (small) 220 / 100
Onion (green) 140 / 80
Onion (dry) 220 / 150
Orange 640 / 500
Pepper (hot) 500 / 380
Pepper (sweet) 240 / 160
Pistachio 160 / 90
String Beans 700 / 550
Spinach 140 / 80
Tomato 130 / 80



Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti Saturday meets with Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Hashem Dabbas (Petra photo)

Kabariti calls for 2-month reserves of fuel at all times

AMMAN (Petra) — In his first visit to the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources since becoming Prime Minister, Abdul Karim Kabariti Saturday asked ministry staff to make sure that at all times a two-month supply of fuel is available throughout the country.

Mr. Kabariti, who met with Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Hashem Dabbas and senior staff said that reserves of oil products should be available all the times to meet

industrial and domestic needs.

He urged ministry employees to work on speeding up ministry procedures in order to serve public interest in an efficient manner, said Dr. Dabbas in a statement following the prime minister's visit.

He said Mr. Kabariti discussed the ministry's work on the development of natural resources and oil products and issued instructions on matters pertaining to the three foreign oil companies that are bidding for the con-

tract to prospect for oil in the Kingdom.

According to Dr. Dabbas senior ministry officials outlined their respective department's activities during the meeting with the premier.

The meeting was attended by Natural Resources Authority (NRA) Director General Fakhreddin Daghestani, Jordan Electricity Authority (JEA) Director General Mohammad Saeed Arafah and the ministry's acting Secretary General Ahmad Bashir.

Police await autopsy on charred body found in Sukhneh

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Police Saturday continued their investigations into the death of an unidentified woman whose charred body was found Friday dumped in the Sukhneh area in Zarqa, according to official sources.

One source, speaking on condition of anonymity, told the Jordan Times Saturday that the coroner had determined that the woman was aged between 16 and 18, and that "most probably (she) was murdered before she was burnt."

"The woman was placed over a pile of stones and straw, and her body was ignited using kerosene," the source said.

He added that pieces of burnt rope were found on and near the body.

He said authorities received a call at 8 p.m. saying that a body was burning in a deserted area close to the Jineh main road near Sukhneh.

The source added that

there was a significant possibility that the woman was murdered before she was set on fire because "the caller informed the authorities that he did not hear a woman's voice and that he only saw a body burning."

According to the source, police were still waiting for autopsy results that would tell whether the woman had been murdered before her body was set aflame.

Police refused to release any details, saying only that they were investigating the incident.

Shepherd dies in accidental shooting

Meanwhile, a 28-year-old shepherd Friday bled to death when he was accidentally shot by his nephew in Hafra town of Karak, according to Public Security Department (PSD) reports.

Awad Mohammad was shot in the left thigh by Faysel Hindawi while tending sheep, the report said.

It said the victim's father Ahmad F., who was accom-

panying them; left his gun and went to pray. A few minutes later, the report said, the father heard a gun shot.

The report said that Faysel was playing with his father's gun when a bullet accidentally fired striking Mr. Mohammad's thigh.

The victim was rushed to Karak Government hospital but died shortly after arriving, the report said.

Toddler killed in home accident

Also on Friday in Zarqa, a three-year-old child was killed when an oven fell on top of him, a PSD report said.

The report said that the child, Ibrahim Mohammad, was home alone when the incident occurred.

The mother of the victim told police that when she returned home she found her son under the kitchen oven. The child was rushed to a nearby hospital but was dead on arrival.

UNRWA staff reiterate demands to new commissioner general in Vienna

By Ghaila Alul
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) staff representatives sent a letter Thursday to the agency's new commissioner general, Peter Hansen, and reiterated their demands for salary raises and explained why they believed the agency's staff in Jordan "have been unfairly treated," an UNRWA staff representative said Saturday.

The staff representative had earlier told the Jordan Times that the survey the agency conducted on its employees in Jordan last year to determine pay equity omitted the fringe benefits government employees in Jordan are entitled to, such as health insurance and loans.

Therefore, he said, the comparison between government pay-scales plus benefits and those of UNRWA was incomplete.

"Our opinion, as staff representatives, was that the survey should include comparisons with the private sector and international institutions, as is the case in other U.N. organisations," the letter stated.

In the letter, UNRWA staff representatives complained of not having the opportunity to participate in the analysis procedure of the survey.

"We disagree with the criterion and weights used by the survey team to qualify benefits, in addition to (applying the salary scale) of government employees. We believe the method used by the survey team undervalued these benefits," the staff said in the letter.

The letter compared pay scale reviews in the recent past. It said the Jordanian government granted its employees a 10 per cent salary raise in 1994, the letter stated, adding that UNRWA in return granted a JD 10 increase to its staff members from grade one to grade 11 and excluded staff above grade 11 from that raise.

"We have never had an explanation why we did not receive the same 10 per cent increase on par with government employees or why

staff above grade 11 were excluded from even the JD 10 increase," the staff added in the letter.

The letter stated that the Government granted all employees in the Ministry of Education a professional allowance equal to 25 per cent of their basic salaries. It had also amended the special allowances for doctors, engineers pharmacists and nurses by 60 to 100 per cent, the letter added.

"We immediately informed the agency administration about these increases in government pay levels when they were implemented," workers said in the letter.

They added that they expected the increase in government pay in 1994 and 1995 would be reflected in the results of the survey and would support an increase for them.

UNRWA workers pointed to the new government regulations that exempt all government employees from income tax saying that this change in law effectively is a pay increase for the higher paid civil servants.

They added that although the agency gave its employees a JD 10 raise equal to what the government granted its employees as of January 1996, the raise was "unfair and unjust."

"The agency did not take into account the earlier increases granted by the government since our last increase in '94," said the workers, demanding that all UNRWA staff be granted a 25 per cent increase on their basic salaries.

An UNRWA staff representative told the Jordan Times that Jordan's ambassador to Vienna had earlier met with Mr. Hansen who promised to meet the agency's staff in Jordan.

"We do not believe in any promises anymore, and we are still demanding better treatment and higher salaries," he said.

He added that UNRWA staff representatives will hold a meeting today to set a specific date for their planned general strike.

UNRWA staff have taken a series of measures against the agency demanding better education, health and social services as well as wage hikes.

Prime minister pledges cooperation with Senate

AMMAN (Petra) — In his first address to the Senate, Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti Saturday pledged that the new government will fully cooperate with the Upper House of Parliament and respect the legislative authority and promote its role.

"I reaffirm to the Senate that among the present government's priorities is to cooperate with the legislative authority, to expand and promote constitutional life and parliamentary performance, and raise the ceiling of freedom and the ceiling of responsibilities at the same time," said the prime minister.

"We will cooperate with

the Senate, benefiting from your wisdom and your views in various matters, and God willing, we will not resort to monopolising authority and will declare only our genuine intentions, and we will not alter the sound course of democracy, drawing in our action on the determination and directives of His Majesty King Hussein who believes in and supports genuine constitutional and parliamentary life and we hope that close cooperation and mutual trust will dominate the relationship between the executive and the legislative branches of government," Mr. Kabariti said.

At the outset of the session, Senate Speaker Ahmad Lawzi welcomed the new government wishing it success in its endeavours and reasserting that the Senate will be acting in team spirit with the government, cooperating fully with the Cabinet in bearing the common responsibility to help Jordan attain its national aspirations.

During Saturday's session, the Senate endorsed the draft civil code and the draft labour law of 1993 as referred to it by the Lower House. The House had endorsed the draft labour law in last summer's extraordinary session.

Ministry seeks to enforce law regarding non-Jordanian workers

AMMAN (Petra) — Striving to enforce the country's Labour Law, the Ministry of Labour asked concerned government authorities to stop issuing residency permits to non-Jordanian workers unless they have acquired work permits in advance, approved by the ministry.

In a statement by newly-appointed Minister of Labour Abdul Hafez Shakhaneh Saturday, Dr. Shakhaneh highlighted proposals and recommendations prepared by the ministry for government approval aimed at reorganising the country's labour market.

The minister said that an Arab or foreign worker seeking employment in Jordan should acquire a work contract approved by the Ministry of Labour before entering the country, in accordance with the law on residency.

Under the proposals, Dr. Shakhaneh said, the ministry would require violators of the law to pay a fine as well as the required fees. He said the proposals suggest that police departments in the country



Abdul Hafez Shakhaneh

keep records of the names of all non-Jordanians living in the Kingdom and ask all employers of guest workers to report the names of those workers to the authorities and also report when they leave their place of employment.

The Ministry of Labour is also suggesting that the Ministry of Interior coordinate with the police departments and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in

ensuring that foreign workers arriving in Jordan be charged reciprocal entry visa fees [that is, foreign workers coming into Jordan would be charged the same amount for entry visas as Jordanians entering the country of origin, (the country of the passport) of the guest worker].

The Ministry of Labour has urged swift action by the government and Parliament to enact the new labour law which, according to the minister, will improve "workers' conditions and help the ministry in recruiting Jordanians rather than foreign workers.

According to Dr. Shakhaneh, the new labour law will aim to set minimum wages for non-Jordanian workers on par with wages earned by Jordanian workers. He added that the law will promote and expand the scope of vocational training programmes for Jordanians seeking employment.

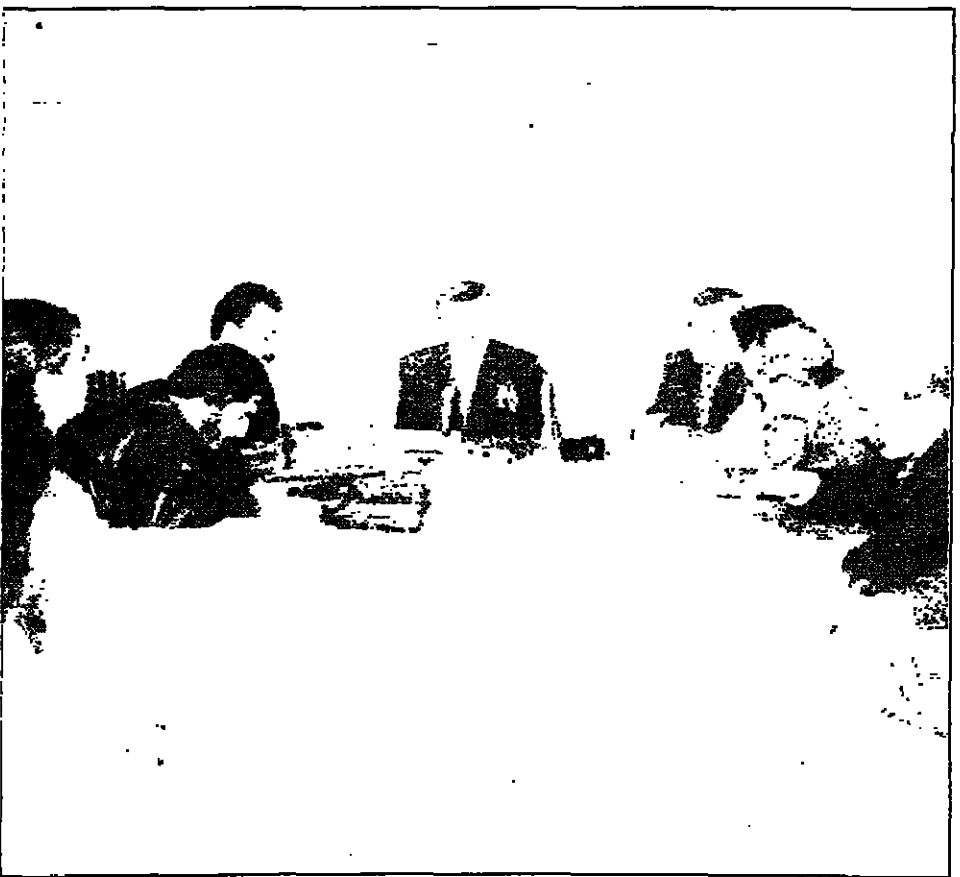
Ministry of Administrative Development plans to create committees to fight corruption

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Administrative Development plans to create what it called voluntary committees from members of the public to help it in its drive to deal with and combat administrative corruption.

Minister of Administrative Development Kamal Nasser who made the announcement at a press conference Saturday said that the formation of these committees will be part of a series of measures to eradicate corruption and end employee neglect of their duties in various government departments.

In the course of implementing His Majesty King Hussein's directives to the new government, said Dr. Nasser, the ministry will introduce an advanced database to help officials assuming leading positions to gain the necessary information for their work. He said his ministry will do all that in its power to put into force the King's directives and will cut down on much of the routine in government offices and simplify procedures so that government business can be executed in the shortest possible time.

In the course of cutting down on routine and facilitating procedures, the



Minister of Administrative Development Kamal Nasser on Saturday briefs journalists on his ministry's plans (Petra photo)

ministry is also contemplating the idea of a plan for conducting normal procedures through mail.

He urged the media to write about and report any

case of corruption or poor management and also highlight the positive side of public administration.

Dr. Nasser announced that the ministry was plan-

ning to set up a royal academy for administrative development to give training to civil servants from Jordan and other Arab countries.

Stanford alumni travel group arrives in Jordan

AMMAN (J.T.) — A group of alumni of Stanford University, in California, arrived in Jordan Saturday as part of a worldwide tour which began in Easter Island and will end in Marrakesh.

The group of 97 people,

representing the Stanford Alumni Association, also includes faculty and staff.

According to Duncan Beardsley, director of the Travel Study Programme of the alumni association, the group's stop in Jordan is focused on a visit to

Petra, which he said was a "high point" of the itinerary.

Mr. Beardsley said the group left the United States on January 19, and is scheduled to return on Feb. 14.

WHAT'S GOING ON

CONCERTS

* Musical performance of oriental music by Mohammad Jabbar at the Phoenix Gallery, Gardens Street, at 8:30 p.m.

* Violin recital by Czech virtuoso Václav Hudecek and pianist Petr Adamec at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

PLAY

Ramadan Supermarket, (in Arabic) at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Engravings by French artists at the French Cultural Centre (until Feb. 29)
* Printmaking and paintings by Jordanian artist Yasser Dweik at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh. Also displaying paintings and sculptures by contemporary artists (until Feb. 18).

Russian troops step up pressure on Chechen rally

GROZNY, Russia (R) — Russian troops stepped up pressure on pro-independence protesters in the Chechen capital Grozny Saturday, firing shots in the air to prevent hundreds of people from joining a rally that is now in its seventh day.

But the head of the pro-Moscow administration in Chechnya said that his government, which said two days ago it was ready to end the demonstration, was against the use of force.

"The problem with the rally should be solved only through talks," Dokuz Zavgayev told a news conference. "Only stupid people can favour the use of force."

As he spoke, local police and Russian troops were blocking some 500 supporters of rebel leader Dzhokhar Dudayev who tried to join the rally in front of Mr.

Dudayev's former Presidential Palace, destroyed last year when Russian troops stormed Grozny.

The troops fired at least twice in the air over the defiant crowd, who chanted pro-independence slogans, waved batons and metal bars and occasionally stopped to dance a traditional war-dance.

ITAR-TASS news agency said the crowd was finally pushed back and around 1,000 people, gathered at the city centre square since morning, had been sealed off by lines of troops and a circle of army trucks.

TASS said no-one had been hurt in two clashes — one around 10 a.m. (0700 GMT) and another around 1 p.m. (1000 GMT) — between police and protesters, who want Russian troops to leave Chechnya and Mr. Zavgayev's admin-

istration to resign.

TASS said that some participants at the rally, which started last Sunday, had agreed to leave the square.

Four buses were driven up to police cordons to take people away but there was no word of anyone leaving so far.

The shooting scared Grozny residents, many of whom were shopping at a local market, and forced them to take cover in houses. By noon the marketplace and the streets were deserted.

Mr. Zavgayev's government decided Thursday to break up the rally and sent local police and Russian troops to seal it off. Russian forces have said they fear the protest could be used as a screen for attacks on them by Mr. Dudayev's guerrillas.

No attempt has been made so far to disperse the rally

but tension grew considerably after a blast from an unspecified explosive device Friday killed one Russian serviceman and two civilians at the square.

The demonstration in Grozny increased pressures on Russian President Boris Yeltsin to end the conflict. Doing so could improve his chances of winning presidential elections in June — if, as expected, he announces his candidacy next week.

Mr. Yeltsin says he is weighing up several peace initiatives, but a military withdrawal would only lead to "carnage".

A Russian government statement issued by TASS said Russian troops would be withdrawn from Chechnya but only after "the necessary conditions for the safety of the population" had been created.

Opposition, police clash in Dhaka

DHAKA (AFP) — Police and opposition activists from the Awami League of Sheikh Hasina Wajed were locked in violent clashes Saturday, near the site of a planned rally that was to defy a government ban.

Police fired tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse militant activists exploding homemade bombs and hurling stones. Seventy people were injured, including a foreign photographer, witnesses said.

The photographer was rushed to a nearby clinic with injuries to her head, they said.

"It is real hell here," one witness said.

Shopkeepers and residents nearby quickly lowered shutters and closed their windows. Meanwhile, troops remained on alert Saturday in Dhaka Cantonment Barracks, the site of Bangladesh Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's residence, ahead of the opposition's threatened march there, witnesses said.

Armed troops, para-military Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and police ringed the barracks and streets were strengthened at all entry points to the area, they said. Vehicles entering the area were being checked by military police.

"Officers have been told to stay in their offices or within contact range," one

defence source said.

In the midst of an election campaign, Mrs. Khaleda left for northern Rajshahi district earlier Saturday is due to return to capital late Sunday.

Trucks equipped with coloured hot water jets and jeeps carrying tear gas canisters had stationed several hundred metres from the site of the planned Awami League rally and march.

The opposition Jatiya Party and the fundamentalist Jamaat-E-Islami party were also to hold separate rallies and stage similar marches to Mrs. Khaleda's residence.

Residents rushed off the streets before the rallies were to begin, as many feared the outbreak of bloody violence between demonstrators and troops.

Ten people have been killed in two weeks of pre-poll violence and scores injured. Several hundred have been arrested.

The opposition, which has campaigned for nearly two years for Mrs. Khaleda's resignation and for elections under a neutral caretaker administration, has vowed to disrupt electioneering by Mrs. Khaleda and candidates from her ruling party, as well as others from 41 minor groups or alliances.

Pakistan denies China nuclear sales

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States raised with Pakistan Friday charges that Beijing has sold Islamabad nuclear weapons technology, but Pakistani Foreign Minister Asif Ali Zardari flatly denied the transaction had taken place.

Asked whether Mr. Ali and U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott discussed the alleged sale of components known as ring magnets, a State Department spokesman said they "did get into that issue".

But Mr. Ali told journalists after the 70-minute meeting that reports of the sales were "entirely speculative. There's no truth in them. We have flatly denied that any such thing has happened."

He said Pakistan had very good relations with China but added: "There's nothing that should be of concern to the government of the U.S.A."

U.S. newspapers said this week China supplied Pakistan last year with 5,000 ring magnets, a component of gas centrifuges used for enriching uranium.

State Department spokesman Glyn Davies said: "We are concerned about reports of transfers from China to Pakistan, and we have a body of material that we are looking at to try to make a determination about how to proceed on that."

China said this week that its nuclear cooperation with Pakistan was for peaceful purposes only.

U.S. anti-proliferation laws provide for economic sanctions against countries that illicitly export nuclear-weapons technology. Some of the laws also penalise the receiving country.

But a key factor in the administration's debate on how to respond to the alleged

nuclear sales is the damage sanctions could do to U.S. firms trading with China.

U.S. officials say some \$10 billion worth of trade financed by America's Export-Import Bank would be affected under any imposition of sanctions.

Mr. Ali said Mr. Talbott had not mentioned possible U.S. sanctions against Pakistan.

In a related development, Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Jesse Helms Friday urged President Bill Clinton to impose sanctions on China for allegedly transferring missile technology to Iran.

"In the face of growing evidence regarding China's role in Iran's weapons drive, and the clear legal requirement that sanctions be levied against China for its missile sales to Iran, I appeal to you to act decisively," Sen. Helms said in a letter to Mr. Clinton.

U.S. officials described the nuclear transfer discussion between Mr. Talbott and Mr. Ali as a "brief exchange" in a meeting called originally to discuss the worsening conflict in Afghanistan.

Mr. Ali said he had brought up with Mr. Talbott the issue of nuclear tests he said India was "threatening" to conduct, Pakistan's concerns over India's Prithvi medium-range missile and Indian actions in disputed Kashmir.

"Naturally this is of concern to both (U.S. and Pakistani) governments," he said. India has said it does not plan to stage nuclear tests.

U.S. officials say both India and Pakistan are "threshold" nuclear powers that could quickly produce nuclear weapons if they wanted to.

Kashmir separatists denounce offer made by ex-militants'

SRINAGAR, India (R) — A leading Kashmiri separatist group Saturday denounced an offer made by four former guerrillas to start talks with the Indian government to end a six-year rebellion against New Delhi.

The all parties Hurriyat (Freedom) Conference, which bands more than 30 separatist groups, said that "these four are Indian agents and are trying for a sell-out."

"Without the participation of Pakistan in the talks, the Kashmir crisis cannot be resolved," a Hurriyat statement said.

Former leaders of four guerrilla groups who had been jailed during the revolt and later released told a news conference Thursday they were willing to hold direct talks with New Delhi without Pakistan's participation.

The four said they were forming an alternative platform to the Hurriyat Conference, which has sought to represent the mostly

Muslim Kashmir Valley.

"The Hurriyat is a failure," Bilal Lodhi, formerly of the Al Barq separatist group, said Thursday. "Their only weapon is strike calls which have crippled the Kashmiri economy."

An Indian government official said: "It's a significant development. The government of India always believes in dialogue rather than violence."

Hurriyat denounced the four former guerrillas. "We will not allow anybody to sell the blood of martyrs. Hurriyat appeals to respective organisations to expel the four leaders from their organisations," the statement said.

Police and hospital officials estimate more than 20,000 people have died since the separatist uprising erupted in 1990 in mostly Hindu India's only Muslim-majority state. Separatist groups put the figure at some 40,000.

Christopher, Primakov set conciliatory tone

HELSENKI (R) — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and new Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov agreed Saturday after their first formal talks that differences remained but that they had made a good start.

Mr. Primakov reassured Mr. Christopher the Russian reform process would continue although some policy adjustments would be made for the sake of people suffering from Western-style changes.

The top diplomats said at a joint news conference following three hours of talks in a Finnish government guest house they hoped any differences could be resolved.

"I would say we are off to a very good start," said Mr. Christopher.

Mr. Primakov said: "We have differences and there will be differences, but all this must be done without confrontation. I don't think there is any basis to consider that U.S.-Russian relations are in crisis."

The meeting, called to ensure relations between the two countries stay on track, was their first formal talk since Mr. Primakov was named foreign minister on Jan. 9.

The appointment worried Washington because Mr. Primakov is seen by some U.S. administration experts as a hardline conservative. His predecessor, the liberal Andrei Kozyrev, was known for his pro-Western policies.

Addressing concern in Washington that recent moves by Russian President Boris Yeltsin could signal a departure from reforms, Mr. Primakov said:

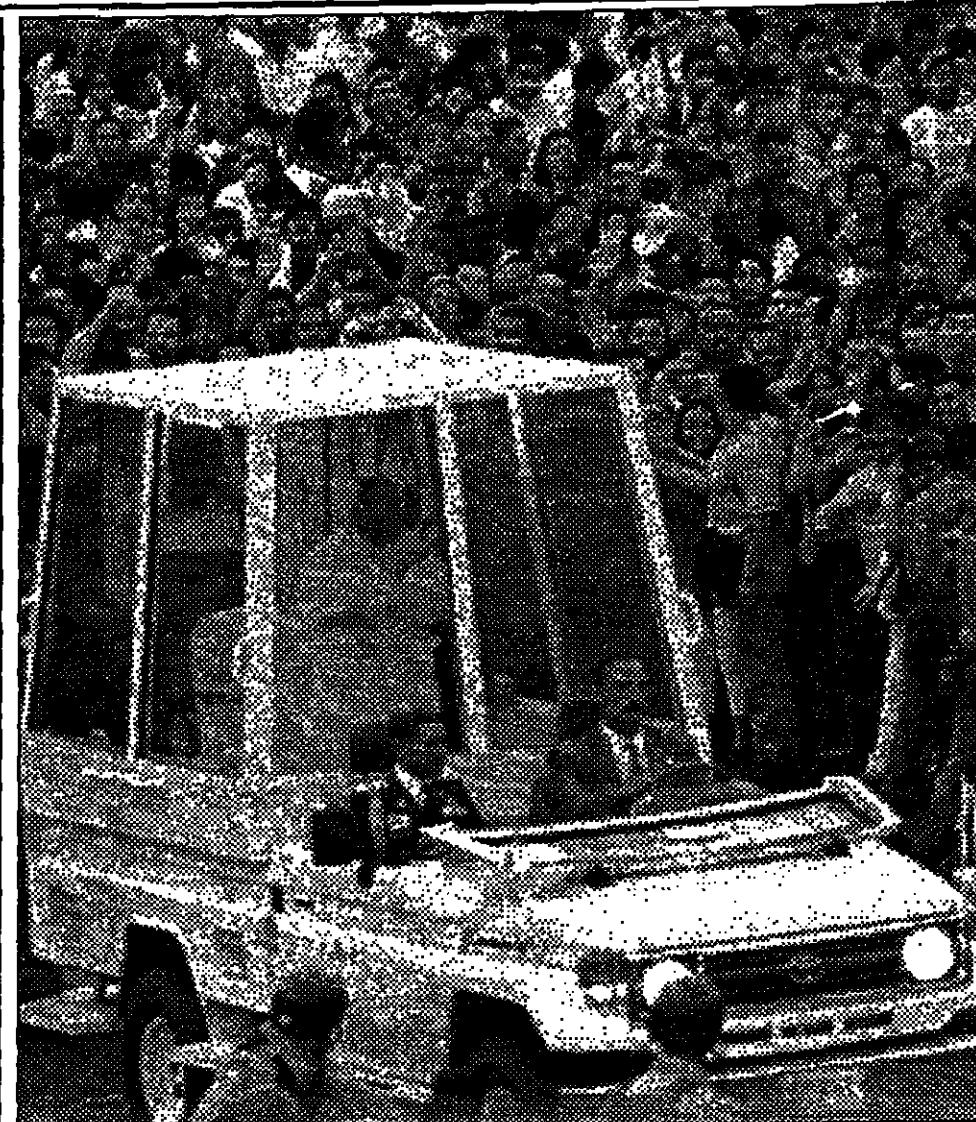
"Of course reforms will continue. Of course there will be no step backwards," he said. "Of course democratisation of our society will continue. Of course the policy connected with President Yeltsin will continue."

U.S. spokesman Nicholas Burns said the two ministers covered key security issues in their talks and agreed there would be more intensive consultations on regional questions. They also agreed there would be "no surprises," he said.

"If we have a disagreement we will talk privately first," Mr. Burns told reporters.

Mr. Christopher and Mr. Primakov, who began their discussions informally at a private dinner Friday night, were on a first name basis, he said.

The tone on Mr. Primakov's side was "reaching out," he said. "Every single part of the conversation was conciliatory." Mr. Burr's said.



Pope John Paul II waves from his Popemobile to the crowd gathered in the streets of Caracas as he heads to Catia Prison shortly after arriving in Venezuela for a three-day visit (Reuters photo)

Pope calls for better conditions in Venezuela's overcrowded prisons

CARACAS (AFP) — Pope John Paul II arrived in Venezuela Friday and immediately confronted one of the country's most pressing social ills: Severely overcrowded prisons regularly rocked by riots and murders.

Going straight to the Reten De Catia Prison after his arrival at the Caracas Airport, the Pope addressed the more than 2,000 inmates crammed into the 700-prisoner capacity prison, the most troubled in Venezuela.

He called on Venezuelan authorities to "promote living conditions better-suited to human dignity" in all the country's prisons in an address delivered to the inmates on television sets in their cells.

The Roman Catholic Pontiff, who spoke from the street outside the prison, recalled that he had wanted to come inside the prison, but security concerns had prevented it.

"I would have liked to have been able to stop and talk with each one of you, and to all those in the other Venezuelan prisons, and to the families who suffer your despair and wait for your much-hoped-for return," he said after he stepped down from his bulletproof "Popemobile."

The Pope was greeted by thousands of people who crowded the area outside the prison. Prisoners could be seen waving tiny flags in the Vatican's yellow and white colours or their shirts between the bars of their cells.

Venezuela's 32 prisons, packed to three times their capacity, long have been criticised by human rights organisations. Each year about 27 people are killed in them, victims of an escalating cycle of violence and repression, as inmates rebel against crack-downs.

The Pope's first act in Venezuela was to bless the prisoners.

For the Pope's visit, President Rafael Caldera pardoned 147 common criminals and 89 military convicts.

Later Friday Pope John Paul II went to the president's residence, La Casona, where he was greeted by Mr. Caldera's wife, Alicia Pietri; government ministers and officials,

and about 150 members of the Caracas diplomatic community.

The Calderas are both devout Roman Catholics, and last May the president visited the Vatican for the beatification of Sor Maria De San Jose, the first Venezuelan to be so honoured.

The Pope will be in Venezuela, where 90 per cent of the 21 million residents are Roman Catholic, just over 48 hours before returning to Rome Sunday.

The Pope also will bless a national shrine, inaugurate an aqueduct bearing his name and hear a song written in his honour during his visit.

As in his earlier stops during his four-nation tour, thousands of people were flocking to Guanare, 340 kilometres southeast of here, where the Pope will hold an open-air mass Saturday and bless the shrine to the Coromoto Virgin, Venezuela's patron saint. Guanare's normal population of 200,000 is expected to swell to as many as 700,000 with visitors from around the country coming to welcome the Pope and hear his homily in a nearby field.

Temperatures are expected to climb near 40 Celsius (100 degrees Fahrenheit).

For the open-air mass at the foot of the shrine, the site was to be adorned with 500 orchids donated by a local agronomist and specially grown to withstand the wilting heat.

The Pope was expected to preach against the growing gap between rich and poor on the last stop of a week's tour of four Latin American countries.

"I appeal to everyone, particularly those in positions of greater responsibility, to help foster a climate of living together in peace, solidarity and justice," the Pontiff said just before leaving for Venezuela from Guatemala, which he visited this week along with El Salvador and Nicaragua.

Besides the aqueduct, Guanare will also be inaugurating \$6.8 million worth of new infrastructure built in honour of the Pope's visit, including a cellular telephone network, expanded airport facilities, paved roads and a new bridge over the Guanare River.

Japan tunnel collapse traps 20

TOKYO (R) — Rescuers raced against time in freezing weather Saturday to reach 20 people trapped in vehicles inside a collapsed highway tunnel on Japan's northernmost island of Hokkaido, police said.

A police spokesman said about 50,000 tonnes of rock and mud had crashed on to the top of the tunnel, causing parts of its ceiling to collapse as a bus and a car were driving through.

The spokesman said 19 people were on the bus and there was a lone motorist.

The accident happened at about 8 a.m. (2300 GMT) and 15 hours later rescuers had still not been able to reach the trapped people.

The victims were inside the 1,086 metre

long Toyohama Tunnel, about 50 kilometres north-west of Hokkaido's capital city of Sapporo.

A 40-metre stretch of the tunnel ceiling was brought crashing down from just inside an entrance to the tunnel.

Among the debris that rained down on the tunnel was a giant rock about 50 metres high and 20 metres wide which was believed to have done the most damage.

The landslide was caused by rain which has swept the area for the past two days.

Rescuers were working in snow and feeding air into the tunnel through hoses.

Work was hampered by fears that further

Washington dismayed Burma will not hand over Khun Sa

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States voiced disappointment Friday over Burma's refusal to extradite reputed Golden Triangle opium warlord Khun Sa and renewed its appeal to the Rangoon government to hand him over.

State Department spokesman Glyn Davies described as a "negative development" a statement by Burmese Foreign Minister Ohn Gyaw that "there is no question of extradition with any country".

Khun Sa, once described by former U.S. Attorney-General Richard Thornburgh as the "prince of death", is wanted in the

United States on heroin trafficking charges.

"We've made no secret of the fact that the drug lord Khun Sa is somebody we'd like to get our hands on because of what he's been up to in the Golden Triangle" opium poppy producing area on the borders of Burma, Laos and Thailand, Mr. Davies said.

"If the government of Burma has made a deal with him, that is very unfortunate," he told a news briefing.

Khun Sa, who was indicted by a U.S. court in December 1989, surrendered to Burmese government forces last month.

Winter doldrums may be hereditary

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Heredity plays a role in seasonal mood swings, according to a study published in a leading psychiatry journal. People who suffer mood swings and eat and sleep more in the winter are likely to have relatives in the doldrums too, researchers from the Washington University Medical School in St. Louis, Missouri, found. There is a "significant genetic influence" over a person's sensibility to seasonal mood changes, Pamela Madden, head of the research team, told AFP. "There is a tendency for seasonality to run in families, and it is largely due to a biological predisposition," the research team said in the Archives of General Psychiatry article. The study looked at 4,639 pairs of fraternal and identical Australian twins who did not live together. Thirteen per cent of the twins complained that seasonality was a problem, 19 per cent reported they felt worse in the winter and eight per cent that their moods worsened in summer, the study found. Between 28 and 33 per cent of the twins said they slept and ate more in winter and that they gained weight; 26 to 31 per cent said the pattern is reversed in the summer, according to the study. Ms. Madden said identical twins were more likely than fraternal twins to have similar seasonal swings. She added that the research was done in Australia, where winter runs from June to September, to disassociate the study from depressions linked to the December holiday season.

French women prefer couch potatoes to Greek gods

PARIS (R) — Forget Adonis. French women, asked about their ideal man, would prefer a couch potato with little professional ambition to a superlover with driving ambition and a body like a Greek God. A poll of 300 French women for the publishing firm Harlequin France, conducted for Saint Valentine's Day, found that just one in 100 women sought an ambitious man and only one in 20 felt professional success to be an important trait. Just two per cent said they dream of a lover with a perfect build, rating a good sense of humour as more important. Men: Do you want to surprise your French girlfriend with a little gift on the day devoted to lovers? Do it with anything but lingerie. In France, it seems there's a lingerie store on every block. But just two per cent of women here dream of receiving a present of racy underwear. Far more appreciated would be a weekend in Venice or in the countryside, according to the poll. Asked what their ideal man should wear, most preferred evening dress.

S. Korean smokers protest stringent laws

SEOUL (AFP) — A group of some 300 mostly middle-aged smokers staged a peaceful but determined street march in central Seoul Saturday, protesting rigid new laws against smoking in public places, witnesses said. Some of the protesters smoked as they waved banners proclaiming themselves "gentle smokers." They protested what they called unfair discrimination against smokers, and demanded that public buildings and office blocks set aside special smoking areas, rather than drive them outside into sub-zero temperatures for a puff. The marchers suggested that the revenue from fines for dropping cigarette butts in the street be funnelled into the building of special smoking areas.



The James River paper mill sits precariously near the raging Willamette River as it nears its crest in Portland. The floodwaters of the Willamette River are threatening to spill into downtown Portland as a result of days of heavy rains in the area (Reuters photo)

Rivers crest in flooded U.S. Pacific northwest

PORTLAND, Ore. (R) — Swollen rivers crested in the flooded Pacific northwest of the United States Friday, leaving a trail of destruction along its path.

President Bill Clinton declared Washington and Oregon major disaster areas, making them eligible for federal aid, after mud slides and flooding caused five deaths and forced more than 20,000 people to flee their homes.

Relief came Friday as days of heavy rain gave way to clearing skies and rivers crested at lower levels than feared.

Portland's downtown business district was spared from the worst of the flood's effects as the Willamette River, which runs through the centre of town, crested inches below the top of a sea wall that had been reinforced by city workers and volunteers.

"There are still some major problems, but I think there's a sigh of relief that things didn't get worse," said Oregon state climatologist George Taylor.

The death toll rose to five early Friday when a man drove his car into a 20-foot (6.1 metre)-deep sinkhole that opened near Kent, Washington, a suburb of Seattle.

In Linn County, Oregon, about 130 kilometres south of Portland, authorities found the body of a man who had been swept away after abandoning his car.

Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber spent Thursday night in a Salem hospital complaining of chest pains after touring the flooded areas but was released Friday after doctors determined he had no cardiac problems.

As skies cleared and sunshine spread across the region many residents began returning to their flooded-out homes Friday, including about 14,000 people who had evacuated the Salem area about 65 kilometres south of Portland.

But evacuations continued in some low-lying areas, including near Vancouver, Washington, across the Columbia River from Portland. Business districts in the Portland suburbs of Oregon City and Tualatin were inundated.

Hundreds of state and county roads were closed in the worst flooding in more than 30 years.

Authorities could not immediately provide damage estimates.

Experts focus on documents, 757 crash debris, black box

PUERTO PLATA, Dominican Republic (R) — Amid confusion and conflicting reports, aviation crash experts dug into documents and debris Friday to try to learn why a chartered Boeing 757 crashed into the Atlantic Ocean, killing all 189 people aboard.

With the search for survivors and bodies over, two refrigerated tractor-trailers in which the victims' remains were stored for two days on a battered concrete pier left the harbour at Puerto Plata, carrying the bodies to a pathology centre in Santo Domingo, where they will be examined by German and Dominican forensic experts.

U.S. officials acknowledged that a Pentagon spokesman was mistaken when he reported that some of the bodies floating in the ocean had been robbed by people in small boats. Dominican officials had angrily denounced the reports of looting.

The U.S. Coast Guard said the belongings of those killed in the crash were apparently torn from their bodies by the impact when the plane crashed into the ocean.

Three days after the crash, authorities still had not located the flight data recorder or major pieces of the plane and had not ruled out any possible causes. The jetliner, owned by the Turkish airline Birgen Air and leased to Alas Nacionales of the Dominican Republic, crashed moments after takeoff Tuesday. Most of those aboard were German tourists returning home from a Caribbean vacation.

The Dominican Civil Aviation official leading the investigation denied another Dominican official's report that search crew had picked up a radio signal from the jet's flight data recorder, or "black box."

Major Emmanuel Souffront said investigators have identified the area where the plane went down in 4,500-6,000 feet (1,500-2,000 metres) of water, but have not located the black box nor any other major piece of wreckage. The flight data recorder is designed to emit a radio signal for up to 30 days after a crash to help searchers find it.

Crash investigators from the United States, Germany and the Dominican Republic met behind closed doors at Puerto Plata Airport Friday to examine maintenance logs, transcripts of conversations between the flight crew and air traffic controllers, and other documents.

Maj. Souffront said the logs held nothing unusual and affirmed that the pilot had not reported any problem with the plane. His last words to air traffic controllers were "stand by."

Maj. Souffront confirmed reports that several of the Turkish mechanics who last serviced the plane were among the passengers killed in the crash, and the wife of a mechanic who stayed behind also was aboard the flight.

"I think that if you repair something and you are not sure that this is OK, you don't sit your family inside," Maj. Souffront said.

Controllers saw the plane make a sharp right turn just before it disappeared from the radar screen, a possible indication the pilot had tried to turn back, Maj. Souffront said.

He said no possible cause of the crash had been ruled out, although the bodies did not have the sort of injuries associated with bomb explosions.

"Without the information from the black box, we can't discharge any (possible cause). We are working on every hypothesis," Maj. Souffront said.

Dominican officials have corrected their earlier statements that 129 bodies had been recovered. Eugenio Cabral, Dominican director of Civil Defence, said 87 bodies were recovered.

The ill-fated jetliner had been substituted for another, larger jet at the last minute, but there were conflicting reports as to the reason.

Maj. Souffront said the 757 was pressed into service because a Boeing 767 originally scheduled to make the flight was grounded by hydraulic problems. But the local director of the company that chartered the flight said the smaller plane was substituted because the flight was underbooked.

Zaire to close all Rwandan refugee camps

GOMA, Zaire (R) — Zaire said Saturday it would progressively close all Rwandan refugee camps in eastern Zaire until all their one million residents had left.

"We will close the camp (at Kibumba near Goma). When the camp is closed we will proceed to close another camp. The operation will continue until all camps are closed and all refugees go home," Interior Minister Gustave Malumba Mbangula, who is also a deputy prime minister, told a news conference.

Mr. Malumba did not say when closing the total of 40 Rwandan camps in Zaire would start but U.N. officials expect 250 Zairean troops in days to ring Kibumba, filled with 190,000 refugees.

"Zairean authorities have decided to implement a programme of targeted repatriation. This aims at the progressive closure of refugee camps...and their repatriation to Rwanda," he said.

The targeted repatriation implies the concentration on the camps to be closed of all information and persuasion efforts as well as the control and removal of intimidators," he added.

Mr. Malumba said the Zairean move to speed up a U.N. voluntary repatriation programme would be carried out by a 1,500 Zairean force formed last year to keep law and order in the camps and another Zairean army force to protect refugees en route home.

The refugees are from the Hutu majority and fled in 1994 during civil war and the genocide of up to a million Tutsis and Hutu moderates butchered by Hutu troops, militiamen and mobs.

Rwanda's government says it will screen all male returnees to uncover if they killed in the genocide. Some refugees say they fear they will be killed in reprisal if they ever return.

Reacting to Mr. Malumba's statement, some aid officials said they feared the operation might turn violent as Zairean troops were poorly disciplined and had not been paid for three months.

Last August Zaire expelled 15,000 refugees but its threat to deport all the refugees by the end of 1995 came to nothing.

After talks with the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other aid agencies, Mr. Malumba stressed refugees would walk back in an orderly manner protected by Zairean troops.

The deputy prime minister said "administrative closure" would stop refugees moving outside camps and put an end to all commercial business in the camps but "necessary assistance" would continue. No new refugees would be registered, he added.

He said the Zairean army was essential to control refugee movements, to assure the security of refugees walking back to Rwanda and to neutralise and take away intimidators stopping them returning.

Mr. Malumba said the new steps would be paid for by the government and UNHCR. Asked how long it would take authorities to clear the one million Rwandan refugees, he said: "We're not in a hurry."

The government wanted to act immediately on targeted repatriation because asylum for the refugees was temporary and had harmed the security and environment of eastern Zaire, he said.

Mr. Malumba said security in Rwanda had improved enough to allow mass repatriation and the government was delighted Rwandan Vice President Paul Kagame had said Friday he welcomed returnees.

He appealed to aid agencies to contribute to the operation so Zaire would not be forced again to expel refugees and clashes between hostile local residents and refugees would be avoided.

War of nerves rages on across Taiwan Strait

BEIJING (AFP) — The war of nerves between Beijing and Taipei Saturday raged on as Taiwan confirmed China's military had begun mobilising ground forces ahead of military manoeuvres near the island.

The see-saw between Chinese reassurance and threat this week has set the tone of the run-up to the first ever direct presidential elections in Taiwan, which China has threatened to invade, should it declare formal independence.

Taiwan's Defence Ministry Saturday confirmed that the Chinese military had been increasing the number of troops in southeast coastal areas of China since Feb. 8, but had not detected any specific manoeuvres.

On Friday, a U.S. Pentagon official said the troop movements, which began on Feb. 3 and 4, have been confined to ground forces, and so far did not appear to involve Chinese naval or missile units.

In Beijing, analysts did not rule out the possibility that China might be preparing to "teach Taiwan a lesson" by attacking one of the small islands claimed by Taiwan.

But diplomats said comments by Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen that the crisis in relations should be solved "by peaceful means" were aimed at soothing tensions across the Taiwan Strait.

According to an opinion poll conducted in Taiwan this week, 75 per cent of those questioned said they did not believe China's official line that it wanted to unify the country by peaceful means.

China has viewed Taiwan as a rebel province of the mainland since Mao Tse-tong's Communist forces drove the Kuomintang onto the island in 1949 at the end of a four-year civil war.

But the Nationalist island continues to come under verbal fire from China, which recently sealed a deal with Russia to buy 72 frontline Sukhoi-27 fighter planes.

On Friday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Shen Guofang spelled out that China would resort to force in the event of "a unilateral declaration of independence or the interference of foreign forces in Chinese internal affairs."

The official Xinhua News Agency also unleashed another lengthy commentary, condemning President Lee Teng-hui's drive for international recognition of Taiwan.

Mr. Shen accused Washington of having raised tensions in the region last year by allowing President Lee into the United States on an ostensibly private visit.

In a separate development, China's Sports Minister Wu Shuozu was quoted Friday as saying Beijing would "react firmly" if the United States invited any Taiwanese leaders to this year's Olympic Games in Atlanta.

But President Bill Clinton has tried to play down the current standoff, saying he did not believe China would attack the island.

Taiwan's top security chief Yin Tsung-Wen Friday also sought to soothe frayed nerves, describing the drill as "routine" and calling on people "not be agitated."

"Our intelligence indicates the mainland is to stage a military drill pretty soon, but it is no way as large as reported," the National Security Bureau director told reporters.

Another Pentagon official said in Washington that a repeat of M-9 missile tests that China conducted last year near Taiwan was of particular concern to the United States, which has warned of the danger of miscalculation by either side if tensions continue to escalate.

"There are some things we see," the official said of the military movements. "There's probably going to be an exercise. How big it's going to be, right now nobody is really sure."

Meanwhile President Lee, in a major policy speech, emphasised Saturday the need for peace with China, while top officials suggested offering an olive branch to reduce tensions with this island's arch-rival.

Reacting to a Defence Ministry announcement Friday that China has begun to move troops to a coastline facing Taiwan, state radio quoted officials as ruling out military conflict.

"The one thing that all people on both sides of the straits passionately wish for is a stoppage to the hostile confrontation between (Taiwan and China)," Mr. Lee said in a campaign rally for Taiwan's presidential elections.

"(We should) create a peaceful environment to develop a mutually beneficial relationship across the Taiwan Straits. The person who is elected president...Has to emphasise this topic," added Mr. Lee, after opening his campaign headquarters for Taipei county, a crucial constituency surrounding the capital.

In a speech Mr. Lee said represented his definitive word on relations with China, the president adopted a more conciliatory tone than in recent weeks toward the island's rival of 47 years.

He said he would gather opinions from different sectors of society and obtain a common understanding with Taiwan's 21 million people on how relations with China should be pursued.

"(I) have the confidence to push for a path which will enable peaceful development across the strait and enable peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region," Mr. Lee added.

The president did not, however, offer any concession on China's central demand that Taiwan scale back its drive to break the diplomatic isolation imposed on it by China.

S.Korea's Kim scraps Japan meeting in island row

SEOUL (R) — South Korean President Kim Young-Sam has cancelled a meeting Monday with Japanese legislators in an escalating row over islands disputed by the two countries.

A spokesman at the presidential office quoted Mr. Kim as saying Saturday that Japan's claim to sovereignty over the rocky islands was "intolerable".

Mr. Kim would also cancel a scheduled meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto during an Asia-Europe summit in Bangkok in March if Japan continued to press its claim over the islands, he said.

"Kim has cancelled the (Monday) meeting. Japan has stirred the anger of the entire Korean people by making a preposterous claim to Tokyo," the spokesman said by phone.

Koreans still harbour bitter memories of Japan's often brutal colonial rule over the Korean peninsula between 1910 and 1945.

South Korea-Japan ties turned frosty last October when Japanese leaders repeated remarks whitewashing their country's past.

Former Japanese Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama enraged South Koreans by saying a 1910 annexation treaty that began 35 years of Japanese rule was technically valid.

The crisis was defused after Takami Eto, then head of the Management and Coordination Agency, resigned, and Mr. Murayama apologised for the controversy.

Japanese Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda lodged a protest with Seoul through diplomatic channels Thursday after South Korea started work on improving a wharf on one of the two Tokdo islands, known in Japan as Takeshima.

Seoul rebuffed the Japanese demand that it stop the work on the island where Seoul has stationed several dozen security personnel and other people.

Clinton to block HIV military discharges

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton Friday challenged the legality of congressional moves to force the discharge of HIV-infected military personnel, and took steps to reverse the provision.

"The president has determined that this provision is unconstitutional. He has therefore directed the attorney general not to defend it in court," Jack Quinn, the chief White House legal counsel, told reporters.

Conservative lawmakers led by California Representative Robert Dornan, a longshot Republican presidential candidate, tacked the provision onto a \$265 billion Defence Authorization Bill that Mr. Clinton planned to sign into law.

It directs that HIV-positive service members be honourably discharged within six months, and is estimated to affect more than 1,000 members of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Sponsors said such individuals were unable to perform full military duties.

Mr. Quinn said the Defence Department had advised Mr. Clinton the provision served no legitimate military purpose and that it was "arbitrary, unwarranted and unwise."

A joint statement issued by Defence Secretary William Perry and Gen. John Shalikashvili, chairman of the Military Joint Chiefs of Staff, said that "discharging service members deemed fit for duty would waste the government's investment in the training of these individuals and be disruptive to the military programmes in which they play an integral role."



The smashed engine involved in the collision of two New Jersey Transit commuter trains is examined by officials in Secaucus, New Jersey, a suburb of New York City. Three died and about 160 were injured in the accident (Reuters photo)

3 die in U.S. commuter train crash

SECAUCUS, N.J. (R) — Two commuter trains crashed during the Friday morning rush hour a few kilometres outside New York City, killing two engineers and a passenger and injuring more than 200 other people, officials said.

An eastbound train apparently ran a stop signal by about three railroad car lengths, jumped the tracks and sideswiped a westbound train, said officials with New Jersey Transit, which operates the trains.

The cause of the 8:45 a.m. (13:45 GMT) collision in Secaucus, New Jersey, remained undetermined but could have been a switching problem or human error, said Bob Randall, general manager with New Jersey Transit.

"Obviously something went terribly wrong," he said. "It could be switch trouble... It could be any number of things, including human error. Basically they were both on the same track at the same time."

Two of the dead were engineers and the third was a passenger who was crushed between two seats, said New Jersey Governor Christine Todd Whitman, who went to the scene.

There were 650 passengers on one train and 100 on the other. Fearful and badly shaken, passengers said they were violently tossed around inside the colliding trains.

"I saw a train coming the other way, and all of a sudden there was an unbelievable crash," said passenger John Miles seated in the front of the eastbound train. "I felt I was rolling over and over and over and I wound up on the other side of the car."

The collision sheared the engineer's compartment off the train and twisted and mangled the first rows of seats, he said.

Some 235 people were injured, 10 seriously, officials said. Most passengers suffered cuts and bruises, and some could be seen afterward wearing splints, neck braces and oxygen masks.

It was not determined whether the stop signal was working, officials said. The westbound train had the right of way, they added.

National Transportation Safety Board investigators found the trains' so-called black boxes, similar to airplane flight recorders, which would disclose how fast the trains were travelling and whether they applied their brakes, Ms. Whitman said.

"We have no idea of the cause at this point," she said. "They clipped each other, and the velocity of the westbound train carried it well down the tracks. There's a lot of twisted metal there."

Jordan Times

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Trip of goodwill

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein's impending visit to Mecca to hold a meeting with the Saudi leadership will mark the beginning of a new era in relations between the two countries after a hiatus of several years. Before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait the two countries always had the best of ties. Coordination and cooperation between Amman and Riyadh throughout the past decades was so far-reaching, and at all levels, that the bond set an example for all inter-Arab relations to follow. As an expression of this outstanding and exemplary relationship, Saudi Arabia, under the reign of the late monarch Faisal Ben Abdul Aziz, had even extended the Jordanian coastline on the Gulf of Aqaba in 1964 by 18 precious kilometres.

That was a significant border rectification and an important territorial concession to Jordan that we can never forget. Never before had two Arab states made territorial concessions to each other, not only in a peaceful manner but also without a quid pro quo. In fact, the opposite happened when Arab countries fought one another over demarcation of border and disputed territory.

Against this background, the hiatus could not but be an aberration in every sense of the word.

Yet, why the process of reconciliation and restoration of status quo ante has taken this long can only be attributed to the deep changes in the Arab order that resulted from the Gulf crisis and war that followed the occupation of Kuwait in 1990. For many years thereafter, Jordan paid dearly, not so much for what it did itself but rather for the colossal error in judgement by others, namely the regime of Saddam Hussein in Baghdad. Now that it is time to call a spade a spade as far as that regime is concerned, we see no reason why Jordan and Saudi Arabia cannot patch up all past differences and restore confidence and warmth to their relationship. And what better way is there to crown the beginning of a new chapter in ties than to hold a summit between the Saudi-Jordanian leaderships, especially at this critical juncture in this region's life? The hope is and remains that our two countries would not only restore fully all previous ties but also strive together to breathe new life in the Arab Order whose name and form most of us seem to have already forgotten.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AN AL Ra'i columnist Saturday expressed the view that the government of Abdul Karim Kabariti has a good chance to show distinguished performance thanks to the clear objectives contained in King Hussein's letter of appointment and given the fact that the new Cabinet is determined and seems ready to respond to the requirements and the challenges of the present and future stages. Hussein Abu Rumman said that at the same time one cannot be overly optimistic, especially as the new Cabinet is just about to embark on the serious business of handling the numerous issues at hand. However, the new government should realise that the extent of authority granted to it by the King to carry out reform and development should be reflected in the results of its performance, said the writer. The government has to prove that it is worthy of the trust and will have no excuse if it fails to shoulder its tasks seriously and to carry out its duties effectively, he added. The writer said the present government has to prove its credibility by living up to its commitment of handling urgent problems plaguing the nation; and it is the right of the public to expect reform and development in various fields. He said that the government can expect a long life only in light of its achievements and the success of its mandate.

A COLUMNIST for Al Dustour said Saturday that all U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher did in his recent Middle East mission was to persuade Syrian President Hafez Assad of the need to keep the Syrian-Israeli negotiations alive until at least the date of the Israeli general elections in May. Even without achieving a breakthrough, such negotiations are viewed by Washington as essential to help Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres win the coming elections, said Saleh Qalab. For his part, Mr. Peres, who realises too well that President Assad can by no means allow negotiations to continue indefinitely without positive results, hoped to move the elections date six months ahead of schedule and for pursuing the talks with Damascus during the election campaign in order to achieve any possible progress like, for instance, a declaration of principles, the writer pointed out.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Projected regional Development Bank — to be or not to be?

THE DEVELOPMENT Bank of the Middle East and North Africa is not dead: not yet. It is only getting smaller — too small to carry out the objectives originally assigned to it. The project may be abandoned altogether at some point in the future, but that is much better than founding a bank that cannot perform the job it was meant to perform.

When the Amman Economic Summit was concluded on Oct. 31, 1995, with a lengthy declaration, we sensed that for all practical purposes, the bank was finished. What was stated in the final declaration was only meant as face saving for the American promoters of the project. The declaration announced in strong words that the bank will finally decide against participation, especially European countries and oil-rich Gulf states, which were supposed to contribute a major portion of the bank's capital. America undertook to secure enough participants and sufficient capital no matter what.

It is now obvious that it is too early to pronounce the bank dead before it is born. According to recent news, America was moving to secure the birth of the bank and claimed, without evidence, that 70 per cent of the authorised capital of \$5 billion is already committed.

Those who know better realise that this movement may not be enough to save the project. Another backward step was taken to scale down the bank even more, which may render the bank irrelevant to the economic development of the Middle East and North Africa.

The paid up capital of the bank was originally contemplated to be \$15 billion. It was later reduced to \$5 billion. Then it was decided that only one quarter of the capital will be called, i.e., \$1.25 billion. Finally, it was decided that this relatively small amount will be payable over five years, i.e., only \$250 million in the first year. Assuming that 70 per cent of the capital is actually subscribed, then only \$175 million will be made available in the first year, hardly enough to meet the start up costs and pay the general and administrative expenses which will be incurred, let alone the financing of large-scale peace projects in the vast region.

The multi-national Development Bank thus all but lost credibility. First, it is extremely doubtful that the bank will exist at all, second, it is even more doubtful that the bank, if established, will be able to make a difference. It will only serve as a fig leaf to cover up for those who failed to

meet their responsibilities towards payment of the peace bills.

By the way, the contemplated Development Bank of the Middle East and North Africa is not meant only to promote and finance regional projects, it will also be charged with the responsibility of coordinating the economic and financial policies of the Middle Eastern and North African countries and Israel. This is almost a mission impossible. It is not known how an international private sector bank will be able to coordinate policies of independent and sovereign countries which may not like to receive orders and adhere to instructions.

During 1996, the third economic summit/conference will convene in Cairo. The question is whether that coming summit will be able to breathe life into this feeble project or find an alternative, feasible project to replace it. Perhaps the conference should give the Europeans a chance to present their vision of helping the region economically. Hopefully, the Americans will not, in turn, block the European ideas, if any.

Small changes, big catastrophes

By Dr. Yusuf Mansur

HAVE YOU noticed all these foreign experts running around loose in Jordan? Does Jordan suffer from a lack of domestic experts, other than physicians? The answer is the affirmative. Is our educational system to blame? Yes, but in ways different from what comes to one's mind. Let's ask one more question before we move into delineations of the answer.

How can a Jordanian go to the U.S. or the U.K., receive exceptional training at a very high cost to Jordan, compete there, obtain degrees and win awards and when he comes back his years of intellectual production become removed and alien? And why, for a country that prides education so much, do we still lack experts? The answer is that the simple rules and regulations used in Jordan tend to dampen not only the desire to excel but also the need for the activities that create expertise.

But before we ponder a detailed answer to this anomaly, let us view what is known to students of the mathematics of chaos as the Butterfly Effect. According to this effect, long term prediction of weather can be almost impossible, not because events are random but because if one wants to predict how a system behaves he must include all the necessary variables.

Failure to include all variables may distort the outcomes drastically. For example, a butterfly in Brazil that has just broken its cocoon and started to fly can cause a tornado in Oklahoma as the dynamic effects of the flutter of its wings accumulate and makes chaos. Small changes at the beginning accumulate and compound in a dynamic system to cause catastrophes. That is why predicting weather for long periods of time is a difficult and almost impossible task. But what does all this have to do with our lack of experts? We have instituted small rules that at first seem insignificant, yet they lead to drastic behavioural modifications.

There are many things that we do in Jordan to destroy specialised knowledge and training, and since most the so-called experts come from academia, I will use this field to demonstrate my view. Let's consider the case of a fresh Ph.D. who has just graduated from an academic institution in the U.S. with a major in economics. The first thing he is asked about applying for an academic position in Jordan is his grade point average. In the U.S., he would have been asked about who his dissertation advisor was and what he wrote about because when one obtains a doctorate degree the most important piece of knowledge about him is his dissertation and at times

he/she is asked to present something from his thesis to the department in order to decide whether what he did was worthwhile or not. Note how one's research is emphasised in the West, while we opt for the easier, lazier measure which is the evaluation of grades which vary from one university to another and never say anything about the different classes or the difficulties of the course that a person took. Therefore, it is as if we tell people to take easy courses to make sure your grades are high if you want a job in Jordan.

The next thing we tell these young scholars is that anything they publish from their dissertation doesn't count toward academic promotions. Why? There is a simple rule in Jordan that states: anything used toward a promotion can't be resubmitted or used again for another promotion. Therefore, a dissertation that has been written in partial fulfillment of the requirements of a doctorate degree can't be used again for promotion purposes. It has already been used once, and any part of it that is published doesn't count as a publication for promotional purpose. This simple rule is so utterly mundane, naive, and catastrophic to Jordan.

These dissertations which every Jordanian doctorate must put behind him as soon as this person joins the Jordanian sphere are the

best works produced by these scholars, possibly throughout their whole careers. Why? Because dissertations are usually written under the tutelage and guidance of world renowned scholars whose salaries we can't afford in Jordan, and with the use of tools and equipment that is state of the art and not available in Jordan, with a drive and zeal that is not hampered by the mind-boggling distractions of bureaucrats. In short, these dissertations are the best works of these Jordanians. When we tell them to forget about their true works of research, we are asking them to give up specialised knowledge obtained under the best academic circumstances. Thus, in a single rule that seems so harmless, we are able to destroy the possibility for our Jordanian scholars to become world renowned.

As if the disregard of one's crowning achievement isn't enough, he is saddled with a huge teaching load — four courses for an assistant or associate professor and three courses for a full professor. This teaching load is typical in the U.S. of teaching, non-research oriented universities and colleges. In these universities teachers are promoted because of their teaching skills. However, in research universities, the assistant professors are given a two-course load per semester in

order that they may devote the rest of their time to research and grant generation. In the first four to five years of an assistant professor's career, the teaching load is limited to two sections of the same course in order to reduce the person's course preparation time and thereby afford him more time to devote to research publishing. Compare this to what goes on in Jordanian universities: the new comers are given the worst courses at the worst time because they usually have no political backing. You will realise immediately that although we want to change and improve we aren't willing to foot the bill.

So a person is told to forget his dissertation, is given a teaching load of four courses a semester which is another drain on intellectual creativity and is forced to search for something else to write about. The quality of his new research work will not match that of his dissertation in which his inputs and those of the industry greats were used and for the rest of his academic career he writes about things that he wasn't really trained for. But this isn't the end of the story, there is more.

Another simple factor that deprives Jordan having domestic experts is the lack of protection of intellectual property rights. Therefore, once a person becomes an expert his creation will not be protected from theft and

plagiarism. Thus, he will not reap the rewards of his hard work. At the end of the day, a rational person who desires to increase his income becomes a generalist and pandering his knowledge in different fields of expertise and squandering all that precious human capital which cost him and Jordan so much to obtain. Furthermore, since intellectual property is not protected, businesses have no incentive to support scientific research or hire out Jordanian professors as consultants. Instead they simply copy original works or purchase counterfeits. Thus, not only is the quality of the intellectual output lowered but also the demand for the services of the Jordanian scholar is diminished.

A small promotion rule, a heavy teaching load and lack of protection for intellectual property, all conspire to make academicians generalists. The nation then calls upon the expertise of foreign experts, some of whom are Jordanians who opted to stay abroad and hone their skills. Most significantly we end up wasting the fruits of all the training received by our brains at a time when they had resources and tools at their disposal. Small changes can lead to major changes and some times catastrophes; that is what the rules of the mathematics of chaos tell us.

'Terror' drives U.S. diplomats from Mid-East

By Robert Fisk

BEIRUT — Washington's decision on Wednesday to withdraw its embassy staff from Khartoum — far from being just a response to another "terrorist" threat — represents another fundamental shrinkage of America's presence in the Middle East. Its departure from Sudan, at a time when the world is being asked to applaud Washington's reported success in an Arab-Israeli peace, means that not a single American diplomat remains in more than half the land mass of the Middle East.

For the U.S. now has no embassies in Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Libya and — in a few days — Sudan. Its diplomats live in virtual fortresses in Algiers, Beirut and Cairo; U.S. citizens are still banned from travelling to Lebanon and are advised to take special security precautions in Egypt, the West Bank, Gaza and, in the last 24 hours, in Saudi Arabia as well. The shrinkage will inevitably mean that U.S. intelligence — never very impressive in the Middle East — will be even more ineffective.

The United States abandoned Iran after its diplomats were taken hostage by followers of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1980, and

closed its compound in Baghdad after Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait 10 years later. The departure of 30 U.S. diplomats from Khartoum on commercial flights over the next few days will mark the third time Washington has evacuated the Sudanese capital in a decade. In 1986, 200 American diplomats and dependants were flown out of Khartoum after an embassy communications officer was shot and seriously wounded in the city; in 1993, more diplomats' families received State Department orders to leave after Washington put Sudan on a list of countries that "sponsor terrorism."

The latest evacuation follows the U.N. Security Council's demand that Sudan hand over three men who it claimed were responsible for the attempted assassination of President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt in Ethiopia last June. The men — all believed to be Egyptian — tried to kill the leader of America's most important Arab ally when he arrived in a motorcade to attend the Organisation of African Unity conference in Addis Ababa.

American diplomats from Khartoum will be relocated, according to the State Department, in a "neighbouring country" —

probably Egypt, although Nairobi has been used as a bolt-hole in the past — to "maintain contact" with Sudan. No such evacuation, however, can be contemplated from Riyadh, where U.S. sources claimed on Wednesday that they had received "new and disturbing reports that... American interests will be targeted by terrorists."

U.S. citizens were advised to watch out for letter bombs. Five American military advisers to the Saudi National Guard — responsible for Saudi Arabia's war against Islamist militants who claim the kingdom is corrupt — were killed in a car-bomb explosion in Riyadh last November.

Washington's isolation with in the Middle East has been further increased by the renewal of the U.S. travel ban on Lebanon, imposed after the 1985 hijack of a TWA jet to Beirut but allegedly maintained because of America's fear that "terrorists" remain in Lebanon. The State Department — which loyally followed Israel's demand for the disarming of Hizbollah guerrillas attacking Israel's occupation army in southern Lebanon — says that it wishes the Lebanese government to take further steps to hunt down the men who killed the U.S.

ambassador to Beirut in 1976, and 241 U.S. servicemen in 1983.

Such demands are at odds with the scene in the Beirut supreme court, in which two Palestinians have been on trial for the 1976 kidnapping of the ambassador. Francis Meloy, Although the Lebanese authorities are asking for the death penalty against the men, one of whom has admitted driving the kidnappers' car, not a single U.S. diplomat has turned up for the hearings. And since U.S. citizens are more at risk in Algeria — where dozens of foreigners have been murdered by Islamists — or in Egypt, where an American is among those killed by Islamist gunmen — the travel ban on Lebanon looks more than ever political.

It has already cut the U.S. out of the lion's share of post-war Lebanese reconstruction being gained by France, Britain, Germany and other European nations. Middle East Airlines, the Lebanese carrier, needs to renew its ageing Boeing 707s, but now seems likely to give replacement orders to Airbus.

The Independent

LETTERS

Conflicting figures

To the Editor:

IN YOUR report (GUVS president says there are 400,000 disabled in the Kingdom, Jordan Times Jan. 30, 1996) the president of the General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS), Dr. Abdullah Khatib, was quoted as saying that the findings of the Department of Statistics (DOS) 1994 census on the number of disabled Jordanians were inaccurate.

The figure released by DOS, 46,940 disabled Jordanians, or 1.3 per cent of the population, was completed rejected by Dr. Khatib, who said that there are 400,000 disabled, constituting 10 per cent of the population.

We find it necessary to clarify the following points related to the general methodology used in our surveys and in the 1994 survey in particular.

A technical committee consisting of representatives from various ministries, such as the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Labour, etc. participated in the drawing up of a questionnaire for the survey.

All recommendations and definitions of the United Nations Organisations or other international agencies are taken into consideration during all survey stages, especially the methods of the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Continuous revision is made of all questionnaires to ensure the implementation of the latest statistical concepts. It seems that Dr. Khatib did not study the details of the questionnaire as he misjudged its contents. Dr. Khatib focused on one question only and ignored the other ten.

The rate of 1.3 per cent of the total Jordanian population means that 7 per cent of households have a handicapped person.

It is worth mentioning that the above rate is acceptable within the range of international handicap statistics and compares with the statistics taken from regional and Arab organisations.

According to a number of surveys in the past 20 years, Bahrain's disabled amount to 1 per cent of the population. Egypt's 1 per cent, Iraq's 0.9 per cent, Kuwait's 0.4 per cent, Syria's 1 per cent and Tunisia's 0.9 per cent.

Public Relations,
Department of Statistics,
Amman.

Saudi visit reflects Jordan's role

(Continued from page 1)

meeting as soon as possible.

Another topic the Crown Prince discussed with President Demirel was the "need for alleviating the suffering of the Iraqi people," and the Prince "explained Jordan's position regarding the need to maintain the territorial unity and integrity of Iraq," said the source.

Also discussed was the ongoing dialogue on a Jordanian-European partnership in view of the Turkish-European partnership, according to the source.

The Crown Prince's talks over the weekend with King Hassan II of Morocco were Jordan's approach to the Mediterranean and the Arab World in general in terms of the Kingdom's foreign policy, said the source.

"King Hassan has fully pledged his country's support for Jordan's peace-building efforts and gave his backing for the proposed water conference to be hosted by Jordan," according to the source.

"The diplomatic initiatives of the Hashemite leadership have shown clearly the future patterns of Jordan's foreign policy, and the factors that govern its implementation," added the source.

Likud to accept May 28 polls

(Continued from page 1)

Israeli withdrawal from the Syrian Golan Heights.

Mr. Peres' challenger for the prime minister's job, Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu, is against any land-for-peace deal with Syria. A Gallup poll published on Friday gave Mr. Peres 52 per cent of the vote versus 30 per cent for Mr. Netanyahu and seven per cent for possible independent candidate David Levy.

IRA urged to denounce violence

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Martin McGuinness (Sinn Féin number two) approved of what has been done and is following the leadership of the IRA in its return to violence.

"The IRA have put themselves out of the process," he said.

Mr. Adams earlier said he regretted "an unprecedented opportunity for peace has been founded on the refusal of the British government and the unionist leaders to enter into dialogue and substantive negotiations."

"I appeal for calm," Mr. Adams said after the bombing. "Sinn Féin's peace strategy remains as the main function of our party."

In a coded statement made Saturday morning to Irish state radio and television RTE, the IRA claimed responsibility for the bomb, adding that the "regrettable injuries" that occurred could have been avoided if security forces had acted promptly "on clear and specific warnings."

The explosion resulted from a bomb consisting of as much as half a tonne of explosives packed into a van, London police said Saturday.

The final estimate for damage caused by the blast could be as high as £85 million.

IMF credit is confidence vote

(Continued from page 12)

support for staples. In 1996, the government eliminated what is seen as well-to-do middle class — meaning an average family monthly income of JD 500 — from subsidies.

Reforms in the civil service and pension system imply ceilings on new appointments in the bureaucracy and salaries. The resistance that the government put up against parliamentary calls for considerable increases in civil service salaries and to agree to an across-the-board increase of JD 10 was partly with an eye on its need to remain within the range set under the economic restructuring programme.

"Overall, these measures represent a more determined effort to promote the role of the private sector in the economy through an overhaul of the regulatory framework, a comprehensive reform of public sector enterprises, an intensified action plan for privatisation, and, for the first time, an undertaking for the divestment of government holdings in the productive sectors," said the IMF.

"In their totality, these reforms would enable Jordan to reap significant benefits in the regional and international economies," added the world body.

The IMF also acknowledged the need to ensure that the low-income segment of the Jordanian society does not suffer as a result of the reforms.

"The programme envisages several measures to strengthen the social safety net to protect the poor from the temporary hardships of the economic reform process," it said, noting the introduction of the coupon system for subsidies and direct aid to poor families.

It also noted that the National Aid Fund (NAF) was extending its coverage to include all poor families and that the fund would administer direct cash transfers intended to compensate for a cut in the subsidy for wheat.

Bosnia hangs over U.S. elections

By Laurence McQuillan
Reuter

MANCHESTER, New Hampshire — With almost eerie symbolism, the first death of an American soldier in Bosnia came as U.S. President Bill Clinton was campaigning in the state that holds the first presidential primary. The fates of both missions are inseparable.

With public opinion polls showing a gradual increase in support for Mr. Clinton as the political election year heats up, the president and his advisors clearly know that a military debacle in Bosnia would dash all his dreams of winning a second term.

Word of the first fatality came as Mr. Clinton was wrapping up a two-day trip to New Hampshire, which on Feb. 20 holds the nation's first presidential primary.

Mr. Clinton faces no challenges for the presidential nomination of the Democratic Party, but had come here to counter some of the Republican criticism of his policies that dominates their debate.

Walking along a street lined with supporters waving his campaign placards in snow-covered Manchester Saturday, Mr. Clinton was asked about the death of the serviceman, who accidentally stepped on a landmine.

At first Mr. Clinton followed the time-honoured tradition of modern American politicians, pretending not to hear the question and walking away.

A few moments later, Mr. Clinton wheeled around and walked back to the small cluster of reporters he had just ignored.

"I told the American people when we started that the place was filled with landmines," he said almost defensively. "It's our biggest danger and we're going to have to redouble our efforts."

The comments almost made it sound as though Mr. Clinton had been pushed into sending 20,000 U.S. troops into Bosnia by

an insistent public. The reality was just the opposite.

Mr. Clinton and his confidants are well aware that American public sentiment, while sickened by the bloodletting in Bosnia, has never been enthusiastic about risking American lives to end it.

Clearly, the Clinton remarks and the campaign setting in which they were delivered did not satisfy the president or his aides.

A short time later, White House officials hurried around reading to reporters a more carefully prepared statement written under Mr. Clinton's name.

Later, against the more presidential and impressive

backdrop of Air Force One, Clinton stood in the biting cold and read the more reassuring remarks — in hopes the television image carried into millions of homes would have less political overtones attached to it.

The White House immediately tried to downplay the potential political implications of the peacekeeping mission — mindful that republicans vying for their party's presidential nomination may fuel the issue.

"It is not a day for politics," White House Press Secretary Mike McCurry said. "The president continues to believe it is necessary to continue the mission."

White House political operatives know that the commitment of U.S. troops to the NATO-led peacekeeping force created a politically risky situation during an election contest that continues until November.

"We hope politics will end at the nation's shoreline," said one official, optimistically hoping foreign affairs would be above partisan politics.

Bosnia currently is not an issue in the election. It will stay that way as long as the list of young Americans dying in Bosnia remains short.

Face it, prohibition of narcotics is not working

By Anthony Lewis

BOSTON — When Bill Clinton named General Barry R. McCaffrey to "lead our nation's battle against drugs at home and abroad," he said General McCaffrey would need, to succeed, "a force far larger than he has ever commanded before — he needs all of us."

What General McCaffrey really needs is a quality that has been lacking in White House drug czars and other leaders of American drug policy for decades. That is an open mind: the ability to look at the policy of drug prohibition and appraise, realistically, what good and what harm it is doing to society.

An honest appraisal, looking coolly at the results, would have to conclude that 80 years of prohibition have been a disaster.

Drugs are as plentiful as ever on the streets. Prisons are crowded with nonviolent drug offenders. And the costs of the losing war are bleeding society, not just in money but in ravaged cities and ruined lives.

More and more people who have opened their minds are concluding that prohibition is not the solution; it is the problem. As in America's "noble experiment" with alcohol, prohibition creates a criminal market for the outlawed product and corrupts the law.

The conservative magazine National Review comes out against drug prohibition in its current issue, dated Feb. 12. It is an impressive issue, including comments by seven people who have studied the problem. The editors themselves

said: "It is our judgment that the war on drugs has failed, that it is diverting intelligent energy away from how to deal with the problem of addiction, that it is wasting our resources and that it is encouraging civil, judicial and penal procedures associated with police states."

Anyone who criticises prohibition as a drug policy is likely to be attacked as a radical, a friend of narcotics and so on. It is hard to say that of National Review's editors. Indeed, they deplore the use of drugs. Their judgment is a practical one.

William F. Buckley Jr., the conservative guru and founder of National Review, says: "The cost of the drug war is many times more painful, in all its manifestations, than would be the licensing of drugs combined with intensive education... We have seen a substantial reduction in the use of tobacco over the last 30 years, and this is not because tobacco became illegal but because a sentient community began, in substantial numbers, to apprehend the high cost of tobacco to human health."

Steven B. Duke of the Yale Law School quotes the previous drug czar, Dr. Lee Brown, as saying that drugs "are behind much of the crime we see on our streets today." The statement would have been correct, Professor Duke says, if it had started with the words "Prohibition of."

He writes of the war on drugs: "If its purpose is to make criminals out of one in three African-American males, it has succeeded. If its purpose is to create one of the highest crime rates in the world — and thus to provide permanent fodder for demagogues who decry

crime and promise to do something about it — it is achieving that end. If its purpose is de facto repeal of the Bill of Rights, victory is well in sight... If purpose is to destroy our inner cities by making them war zones, triumph is near."

Another commentator, Ethan Nadelmann of the Lindesmith Centre in New York, shows the cruel results of drug enforcers' zealotry. Doctors, afraid of prosecution, withhold opiates that could ease the pain of terminal patients. Victims of multiple sclerosis and glaucoma are denied the marijuana that would help them, as are patients for whom it would reduce the nausea that results from chemotherapy.

In this election year, it is hardly necessary to say that no leading politician in Washington will look honestly at the cost of drug pro-

hibition — not President Bill Clinton, not congressional leaders. They will all assume their tough-on-drugs pose.

Nor does there seem to be much hope of fresh thinking from General McCaffrey. Shortly before his appointment, he told the conservative Heritage Foundation: "This isn't a tough problem like AIDS or racism or poverty. We know where the drugs are grown, we know where they're moved..." In other words, go on with the interdiction efforts that have failed so dismally.

It would be nice if the next time a drug official talked to the Heritage Foundation — or any audience — someone had the courage to point out, like National Review, that the policy has no clothes.

The New York Times

Syria, Iraq seek united water stand

(Continued from page 1)

Syrian Foreign Ministry, accused Turkey of turning down two invitations to hold ministerial talks with Syria and Iraq over the water dispute.

Mr. Rifai said the Arab League had put the Euphrates issue and the establishment of an Arab water studies centre in Damascus on the agenda of an Arab foreign ministers meeting on March 13.

Officials said the foreign ministers of Syria, Farouk Al Sharaa, and Iraq, Mohammad Al Sahaf, might hold talks on the sidelines of the Cairo meeting to coordinate their stand on the water issue.

Mohammad Al Hasbani, an official at the Syrian

Sudan hunts

(Continued from page 12)

cuses Sudan of arming and training militants in Egypt. Eritrea and Uganda have severed their diplomatic ties with Sudan and the Organisation for African Unity (OAU) has backed Ethiopia's claims against Khartoum.

The threat of sanctions also cast a looming shadow over Sudan's already suffering economy.

Since the 1989 coup which brought President Omar Al-Bashir to power in 1989, the value of the Sudanese pound dropped from five to the dollar to reach 950 to the dollar in private exchanges.

Mr. Kahlifa insisted Khartoum has cooperated fully "ever since Ethiopia made its extradition demand in August 1995."

U.S. ambassador eyes Lebanese recovery

WASHINGTON (USIA) — The new U.S. ambassador to Lebanon assured Lebanese Americans here that there is "no nobler assignment for a foreign service officer like myself" than to assist in the Lebanese recovery following the country's 17-year-old civil war which ended in the early nineties.

Richard H. Jones was speaking Feb. 8 at a reception in his honour hosted by the Lebanese ambassador, Dr. Riad Tabbarah, at the Lebanese embassy here.

He said no date has been set for his departure to Lebanon but he said he expects to leave "very, very soon." Lebanon has been without an American ambassador since November 1994 when Ambassador Mark G. Hambley returned home on medical leave. He is now the Special Representative at the Commission on Sustainable Development at the State Department.

Recalling that in his swearing-in ceremony he

saw about the "hard times" that befell Lebanon in the seventies and eighties, Mr. Jones noted that the country is now recovering from that period.

He continued, "And I can think of no nobler assignment of a foreign service officer like myself to have than to be able to work to help assist in that recovery process."

Mr. Jones added that building stronger relations between the two countries "will very much contribute to that (recovery), and I certainly have that as my number one goal."

Two issues of immediate concern to the Lebanese government and the Lebanese-American community — the ban on travel to Lebanon and on the country's national airline landing in the United States — were raised.

Ambassador Tabbarah alluded to the two issues when he pointed out that Mr. Jones would be making a stopover in Europe and using a U.S. helicopter in Cyprus

for his last leg to Beirut. He expressed hope that on the next trip to Beirut Mr. Jones can travel directly and see how "friendly the Lebanese people are at the airport."

After mentioning that the U.S. government felt justified in imposing and continuing the travel ban, Ambassador Jones said one of his tasks in Beirut "will be to try and create conditions which will allow my government to lift the ban."

He added, "I am not sure I can do it in a few months. I do not want to promise anything. Let's put it this way: I can't promise results but I can promise effort."

He concluded by saying that he takes his assignment in Beirut "extremely seriously" and promised to work "very hard to bring that day forward" when the historically "warm and close" ties between the two countries will be reestablished once these "certain barriers" are overcome.

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Arab economy lags behind population growth

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The Arab per capita income has steadily declined over the past 15 years because the economy has failed to match growth in the population, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Between 1980 and 1995, the population of the 22-member Arab League grew by an average three per cent annually while the rate of economic growth did not exceed one per cent, the IMF said in a study to a recent seminar in Abu Dhabi.

As a result, the per capita income in the Arab World declined by around 1.5 per cent during that period at a time when the other developing nations recorded a growth of three per cent, said the study, obtained Saturday.

"In general, the growth in the Arab per capita income in the past 15 years was disappointing whether in absolute value or in comparison with other countries. This has also aggravated the unemployment problem," it added.

The IMF gave no reason for the slow growth rate in the Arab states but most oil producing members, mainly those in the Gulf, started to record negative growth after the mid 1980s, when crude prices began to fall.

According to official Arab reports, the economies of some non-oil members have gained momentum over the past few years due to reforms. But weak oil prices have kept pressure on the gross domestic product (GDP) of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf oil producers, which have also announced reform plans.

After a rocketing growth in the GDP of more than 10 per cent during the oil boom of late 1970s, the economies of Gulf states slumped to as low as two per cent in the late 1980s while some of them recorded zero growth in some years.

The IMF said the rapid population growth and slow

economy had created serious unemployment problems in many Arab nations.

"The pressure on the Arab labour market will continue in the future because more than 50 per cent of the population are aged below 15 years," it said.

"In the oil producing members, especially in the Gulf, there are no serious unemployment problems but they are facing challenges in finding jobs for the increasing number of nationals joining the workforce," the study added.

The report said low economic performance in the oil states had narrowed the gap in the per capita income in the Arab region. But it remained vast in the case of super-rich and impoverished members, it added.

"For example, the per capita income in the two wealthiest members, Kuwait and Qatar, is nearly 75 times that in the two poorest members, Sudan and Somalia," the report pointed out.

China will not liquidate loss-making state firms the 'capitalist way'

BEIJING (Agencies) — Chinese Premier Li Peng has said reform of state enterprises cannot follow the capitalist model, with bankruptcies and layoffs, for fear of mass unemployment, pro-China Hong Kong newspapers have reported.

The premier's call for a go-slow approach to one of the thorniest problems in China's embrace of market economics came as a major state bank said it suffered losses of 60 million yuan (\$7.2 million) in the bankruptcy of a state-run textile firm.

The branch of the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China in the northeastern city of Harbin said the Harbin Knitting and Textile Co. feigned bankruptcy to avoid repaying debts.

In interviews with Hong Kong's three Beijing-backed newspapers, Mr. Li said China would not liquidate loss-making firms the "capitalist way" with massive closures, bankruptcies and layoffs.

"If China were to use such capitalist methods, it would shirk its responsibility to the people and it would trigger social unrest," Mr. Li was quoted as saying by the Wen Wei Po newspaper. "There was one firm that cut more than 100,000 jobs in one shot. Obviously we could not do that."

China had yet to establish a comprehensive system of social security, including old-age pensions, medical care schemes and unemployment insurance, Mr. Li said.

China would "gradually progress" towards providing such a safety net, he said, adding that he could not confidently say whether the net would be firmly in place even after a decade.

"Capitalist society has taken more than 100 years to do so," Mr. Li was quoted as saying.

In reforming the lumbering state sector, China would help firms that were critical to state plans or popular welfare. Less important firms would be given more freedom to reform and restructure, but with emphasis on avoiding closures.

State media backed the cautious approach to bankruptcy, and said ailing firms were turning to liquidation to avoid repaying loans or to cover other debts.

"Feigning bankruptcy causes grave losses to creditors — namely banks — and also disguises the managerial shortcomings and defects of those firms themselves," the Financial News said in an editorial on the Harbin firm's bankruptcy.

The economic daily said that while bankruptcy was inevitable in some cases, "China should firmly block firms from using bankruptcy as a way to repudiate debts."

Analysts say China's state banks are caught between massive non-performing loans, due to government pressure to keep lending to ailing state enterprise to avoid painful job cuts, and losses when those firms go broke.

"Borrowers' bankruptcies are so common in other state banks, that people say that the bankruptcies of state enterprises equal the bankruptcies of state banks," an official of the Industrial and Commercial Bank said in Beijing. "China has no effective ways to protect creditors' rights."

About 70 per cent of China's 100,000 state enterprises are in the red, with 40 per cent suffering chronic deficits, a Chinese economist said. He estimated that of these enterprises' 90 million employees, 20 million were redundant.

A poll last month by the State Commission for Economic Restructuring found that ailing state firms had average debt-to-asset ratios of 80 per cent and relied on state bank loans for 95 per cent of their working capital.

U.N. member states to U.S.: Pay up

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — The European Union (EU) Friday accused the United States of being the "primary cause" of the unprecedented U.N. financial crisis, joining a chorus of states urging Washington to pay its arrears.

Although no consensus emerged at the session of a U.N. working group on future measures to underpin the U.N. financial system, participants said there was mounting agreement on one issue — that Washington must clear its arrears of \$1.2 billion to ease the current crisis.

The United Nations is currently owed some \$3 billion by member states and unless arrears are paid off will run out of cash at the end of the year, chief financial officer Joseph Connor told the U.N. Assembly working group on the financial situation this week.

In a speech to the group on behalf of the EU, Italian deputy permanent representative Lorenzo Ferrarini said that "arrears are one of the main financial problems" of the United Nations.

"The European Union believes that certain member states are consistently late or in arrears, because they simply do not appear to regard the U.N. as a priority," he said in an allusion to Washington.

The Republican-dominated Congress is holding up payment of U.S. dues to the United Nations demanding that far-reaching reforms are implemented.

Mr. Ferrarini said that such a failure to pay promptly was "the primary cause of the serious financial crisis."

The United States contributes a quarter of the U.N. regular budget which has been set at \$1.3 billion for 1996. Only 26 states out of 185 have paid this year's contribution so far.

The Italian representative recalled that the U.S. was calling for a system of incentives and penalties aimed at encouraging prompt payment of dues.

But Singapore ambassador

Bilahari Kausikan told the forum that "no new scale of assessment, however elegantly or ingeniously devised, will work unless there is a political commitment by all members to abide by it."

In a bid to overcome the deadlock at the working group, which ended its current session Friday and resumes next month, U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali in a speech Tuesday put up a proposal that would cut the U.S. budget contribution.

In a departure from his prepared text, he suggested introducing a ceiling of "20 or even 15 per cent" for member states' contributions to the regular budget to ensure a more even representation.

His comment threw European missions into turmoil, alarmed that the EU would be asked to make up the funding shortfall if such a proposal was accepted.

Diplomats sought more details saying that the proposal marked a departure from the fundamental U.N. principle

that member states contribute according to their "capacity to pay."

At present, the United States pay 25 per cent of the U.N. regular budget and is the largest contributor. Under the Boutros Ghali proposal its dues would be cut by up to 10 per cent.

The U.S. mission has not reacted to the proposal.

Dr. Ghali's spokesman Ahmad Fawzi told reporters that the ball was in the member states' court. He also noted that Dr. Ghali was calling for a special Assembly session on the financial situation, "and we hope that they decide to convene it soon."

Several diplomats commented Friday that Dr. Ghali's address was essentially "an election speech" aimed at securing his reelection for a second term after his current five-year mandate runs out this year.

Washington's support is seen here as being a necessary prerequisite for his reelection.

Iraqi dinar slumps after weeks of gains

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq Saturday blamed speculators, traders and hostile news media for a sudden slump in the value of its dinar currency against the U.S. dollar following spectacular gains in the past few weeks.

The dollar was trading at about 70 dinars, up from 500 early this week.

The dollar had been worth as much as 3,000 dinars before Iraq decided last month to enter talks with the United Nations on ways of implementing U.N. Security Council Resolution 986.

The measure would allow Iraq to sell \$2 billion worth of oil over six months under controlled conditions to buy badly needed food and medicine. Iraq has been under U.N. trade sanctions since shortly after it invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

The talks on an oil-for-food deal opened at the U.N.

Tuesday. The official Iraqi News Agency (INA) said Saturday in a report from its New York correspondent that postponement of further talks until Monday was a sign negotiations were going well and the two sides were near agreement.

Diplomatic sources at the U.N. said Friday that Iraq believed the opening round was going so smoothly that the talks might end as early as Tuesday.

The drop in the dinar's value has led to a surge in prices for some essential commodities.

One kilogramme of sugar sold for 450 dinars, up from 250, and one kilogramme of chicken cost 1,800 dinars compared with 1,250 recently. A box of 30 eggs soared to 2,500 dinars from 1,500.

"It is really astonishing to see prices skyrocketing by 100 per cent," the newspaper

Babel, published by President Saddam Hussein's son Uday, said in a commentary.

It blamed speculators and the central bank for limiting the amount of money depositors could withdraw from their account.

The government newspaper Jumhuriya pointed at "dubious regional circles" for suggesting that the oil talks with the U.N. could not succeed. It did not elaborate.

The paper likened Iraqi merchants who rushed to buy the dollar when it dropped to 500 dinars to "monstrous whales."

Jumhuriya also hit out at radio Monte Carlo and its Amman correspondent for broadcasting "hostile news" that helped the dollar regain some of its lost ground.

The Radio Monte Carlo correspondent in Amman, Randa Habib, said she had not filed a story about Iraq for more than a month.

Possession of hard cash and exchanging money are no longer illegal in Iraq. More than 40 bureaux deal with foreign cash in Baghdad at rates close to those on the spot market.

Traders and money changers say millions of dollars exchange hands in Baghdad these days. Iraq's state banks are also said to have collected record amounts of hard cash when they offered rates higher than those in the sport market for about two weeks.

Study: Europe will remain top investment region

DAVOS, Switzerland (AFP) — Europe attracts four times the capital investment of Asia, and will remain the top world region for international investors for some time, according to a study.

Direct investment in Europe will continue to exceed that in any other region "at least until the year 2000 and probably for many years after," said Jean-Daniel Tordjman, an investment expert presenting the report.

Western Europe attracts "by far the highest level of direct investment in the world: '\$1,000 billion out of \$2,300 billion worldwide, or 43 per cent of the current worldwide total,'" he said.

Among other conclusions the report said that China will suffer in the long-term because of interest rate problems, while India "has considerable potential but still suffers from a significant shortfall of industrial capacity."

"These examples are not intended to sow doubts about the potential for growth in these countries, but what they do show is that there are risks everywhere," the study indicated.

Current investment in western Europe is double that of the United States and four times that of Asia. If Europe's economy grew by only two per cent a year it would still add the equivalent of Indonesia to the economy every year, according to the report.

The study, which questioned 260 specialists, found that multinationals are motivated to invest in regions less by low labour costs than by the need for high-qualified workers and a good infrastructure.

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HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1996

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Your mind is working cleverly today and you know what should be done to become more successful in your undertakings.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Try to gain whatever data you need confidentially today, and then later tonight use it wisely to gain your finest aims for your success.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Plan early today how to gain your greatest ambitions and then go after them in a positive way. A compliment works wonders.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Do as much public activities this morning as you can and gain added prestige, success, and profit later this evening as well.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) This is a good day today to take those chances you have in mind, but don't just start and then get cold feet for good results.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Be more concerned with the big issues today instead of concentrating on the details so much of any enterprise you are involved.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You can today view your partners from a different and better angle at this time and come to a fine understanding with them.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Be enthusiastic about accomplishing a good deal today and you can do just that and efficiently, also. Channel energies constructively.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Put dull duties aside and go after what is important in the business world and gain your aims. Also, have a good time.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) If you use the right words at this time, you can easily get your family to do what you wish. Study your home for needed repairs.

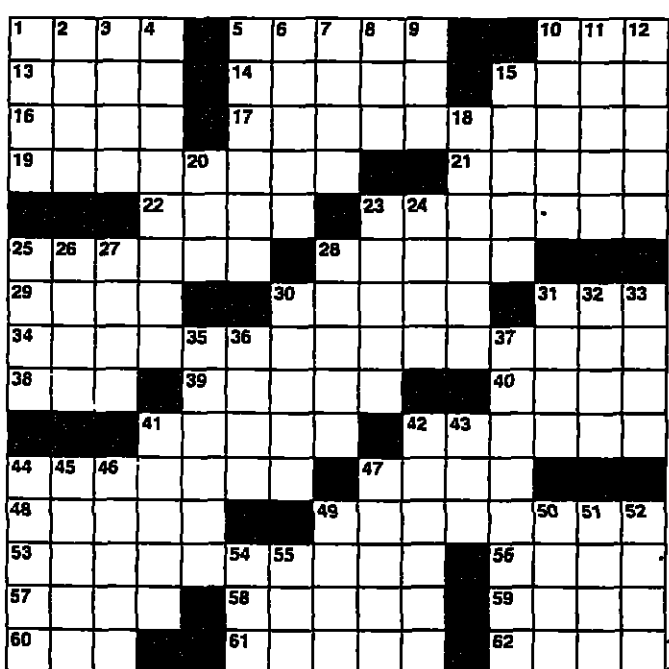
AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) This is a good day today to see as many persons as you can, whether for business or personal purposes and get good results.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Think over what you can do to have more success later this evening so that you need not worry about finances or monetary obligations.

Birthstone of February: Amethyst — Only.

THE Daily Crossword by Bernice Gordon

- ACROSS
- Setting of precious stones
 - Sour
 - Attention from the nurse
 - King of Norway
 - Water wheel
 - Mets' stadium
 - American Beauty, for one
 - Play up to the audience
 - Providing nourishment
 - Banks of baseball
 - North Korean river
 - Legacy
 - Bryn Mawr grad
 - Eye of a bean
 - State in Brazil
 - Home to an eagle
 - Recede
 - Olmos film
 - Grig
 - Lament
 - Hackman of films
 - Vista
 - Pennant
 - Tax
 - classification
 - Alliance letters
 - Mlle. Anouk
 - Bear
 - Total cessation
 - Winglike
 - Dispatched
 - Blood carrier
 - Nick and — Charles
 - Old hush-hush gp.
 - Avarice
 - Some bills



- DOWN
- Smut
 - Name in baseball
 - Great in area
 - Old morality play
 - Ms. Lansbury
 - Hom-like bone
 - Part of QED
 - Japanese money
 - Up to no good
 - Macbeth, e.g.
 - Soft consonant
 - Military student
 - Play the ukulele
 - Certain literary work
 - Fleming
 - Nicolas Cage movie
 - Author Wiesel
 - Section of a church
 - Not punctual
 - Russian range
 - Shrub boundary
 - Concerning, old style
 - Level
 - Part of n.b.
 - Rabbit
 - out (all dressed up)
 - To shelter
 - Unknown

Yesterday's puzzle solved

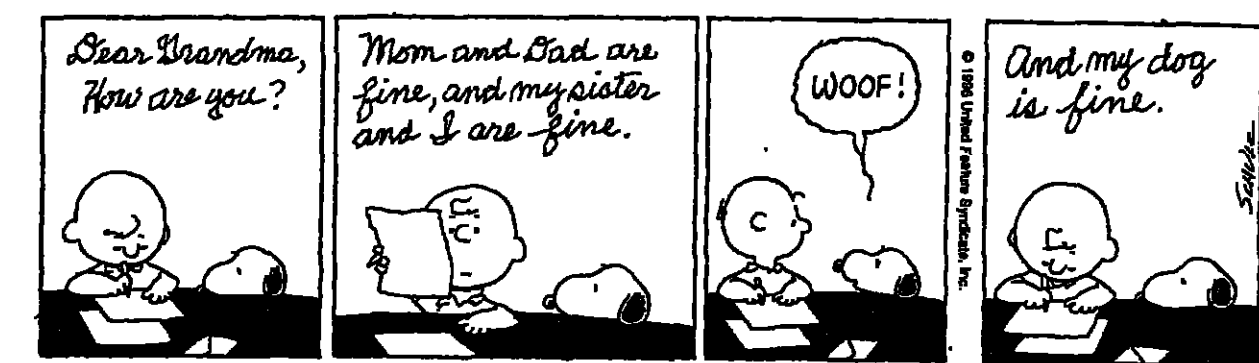
STEVE DORE ROSES
CALEB DONIA ITRATE
ALIGNMENT SUMAC
REX AERS JEROME
ASIS SEME OVID
BERNIE DARE ANE
ANDS MILDRED
TAKEIT ACCESS
ROBERTA SHIN
EMO TOCH ODETITA
TOUT RYAN BEIT
ARTURS RIAS DEL
IRENE ALEXANDRA
LOVED DECEMBERS
SWEDE SMELLARAT

- Aroma
- Poem set to music
- Noshed
- Operatic singer
- Ceremonies
- house is his castle
- Nick of films
- Become bored
- African plant
- Mountain lake
- Time periods
- Drop
- Rocky crag

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



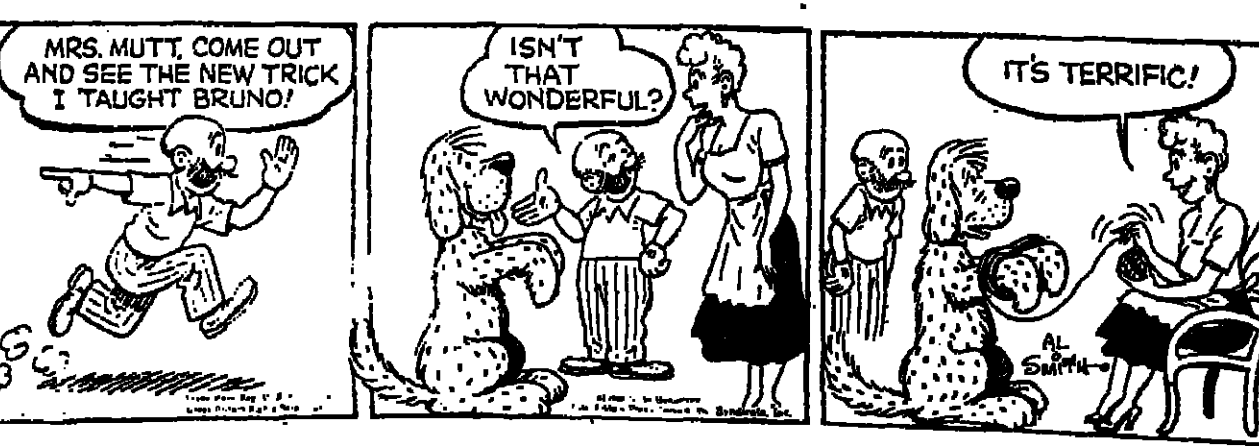
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



Business & Finance

Jordanian industrialists in Iraq to discuss ties

AMMAN (R) — A team from Jordan's influential Amman Chamber of Industry, a long-time advocate of strong economic ties with Iraq, is in Baghdad to discuss cooperation, a chamber official said Saturday.

The delegation, headed by chamber chief Khalid Abu Hassan, left for Baghdad Friday night and is expected to return late Wednesday.

Jordan last month slashed exports sent to Iraq under an annual trade protocol in return for cheap Iraqi oil. Officials blamed high Iraqi debts but the move followed increasing political strains.

Amman said it will send items allowed by the United Nations worth just over \$200 million, down from over \$400 million last year. Jordan said Iraqi oil imports would continue unaffected.

Jordan's pro-Iraqi business community said the decision was a severe blow to industries still suffering from the 1990 Gulf crisis. Many traders said it was part of King Hussein's tough line against Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

A recent study by the Amman Chamber of Industry said Jordan exported goods worth \$2.17 billion to Iraq between 1989 and 1995, mainly in food and detergents.

Bankers to stage sit-in today to protest arbitrary dismissals

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The General Union for Workers in Banks in Jordan announced Saturday that its administrative committee is organising a symbolic three-hour sit-in today at the downtown main branch of the Cairo Amman Bank in protest against what it termed as arbitrary dismissal of the bank's employee Akram Nimri and the sacking of three bank employees from the Arab Land Bank Shawaqi Ghanam, Burj Shawaqi and Saleem Al Jarir.

A circular to union members, union president Abdullah Khalil said that the union was resorting to this measure after all attempts to persuade the concerned banks to reconsider their decisions through different channels of communication have failed.

"We regret to resort to a sit-in from 12 noon to 3:00 p.m. in order to draw public attention to the workers' plight and in a bid to force the banks to halt such arbitrary practices," said Mr. Khalil.

He said that for no reason, the Cairo Amman Bank dismissed Mr. Nimri on Jan. 1, 1996 after a 30-year service at the bank, adding that Mr. Nimri is a member of the union's administrative committee and member of the central council of the Federation of Jordanian Labour Unions.

The union has repeatedly approached the Cairo Amman Bank through proper channels and through the Ministry of Labour to seek the return to Mr. Nimri to his work but no avail, and similar attempts were made in vain on behalf of the other three employees at the Arab Land Bank, said Mr. Khalil.

Noting that the union's action will be supported Sunday by representatives of the different unions in Jordan who will be present at the sit-in, Mr. Khalil said that the protest is just a gesture of warning to the bank's administration to refrain from arbitrary dismissals and as a show of solidarity with the dismissed employees.

He said that on March 1, 1996 there will be a general conference at the Professional Associations Complex in Shmeisani which will be attended by Parliament members, representatives of the press and the various unions to discuss further labour action. He said that the March meeting was expected to endorse a series of measures that would guarantee security for the banks' employees.

In a bid to win support for its action, the union has been in contact with Jordanian political parties, the Lower House of Parliament and the Ministry of Labour and also sent letters to former Prime Minister Prince Zeid Ben Shaker asking for their interference and the re-institution of the dismissed workers. A letter was also sent to the Royal Court.

He said that these parties have been in contact with the concerned banks over this issue but the banks were adamant in their stands.

He said that the union is making arrangements for further steps should the two banks remain intransigent, but declined to go into details.

BUSINESS

A review of news from the Arabic press

Phosphate company negotiating with Norwegian firm for setting up joint venture

☆ JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES COMPANY (JPMC) General Manager Sameh Al Madani has revealed that negotiations are under way between JPMC and the Norwegian company Norsk Hydro to set up joint ventures to manufacture fertilisers and market the product internationally. Mr. Madani indicated that the projects are expected to cost between \$350 million to \$400 million and that they will be in the area between Shidiyah and Aqaba. He stressed that the phosphate company had largely contributed in attracting foreign investment, raising the value added and diversifying phosphate products as well as marketing them.

Mr. Madani said that the JPMC's drive to diversify its products would be achieved by building a strong base for manufacturing fertilisers. He expressed readiness to cooperate with all the countries of the region in this regard and noted that any joint project would be studied with those countries and Israel on condition that it would be beneficial to both sides.

The JPMC and Norsk Hydro signed a memorandum of understanding during the MENA economic summit, held in Amman last year, to set up a compound for chemical industries at the free zones of Shidiyah and Aqaba (Al Aswaq).

Cancelling subsidies would be catastrophic — Consumer Protection Society

☆ A STUDY by the Consumer Protection Society has shown that cancelling the subsidies of basic foodstuffs (bread, sugar, rice and milk) would result in at least doubling the prices of these products and that the monthly expenditure of each income group would, at best, also double. The study stressed that if the subsidies were to be lifted, those earning JD 150 and less would be the hardest hit because the less a person earns the more he spends on basic foodstuffs. As such, the study says, the additional financial burden would be 16.5 per cent for the category earning less than JD 100 per month and 14.6 per cent for the JD 100 to JD 150 per month income group. Those whose income is JD 300 per month will have an additional financial burden of seven per cent with still higher income being less affected. The head of the society commented on the findings of the study by warning that if the subsidies are lifted what is left of the income of all categories would not be enough to cover expenditures on other needs such as vegetables, meat, water and electricity, clothing, health and education. He said that any suggestion on cancelling the subsidies, and especially for bread, would be unfeasible because it is impossible to be borne by the groups of consumers surveyed.

Furthermore, the head of the society said, the continued rise in prices of other products would force a reduction in the purchasing power of 80 per cent of the consumers who would be pushed further to the edge of poverty (Al Dustour).

Transport company to distribute dividends at a rate of 35 per cent

☆ THE VEHICLES OWNERS FEDERATION COMPANY registered a total earnings of JD 527,000 in 1995, slightly higher than the earnings in 1994. The company's net profit amounted to JD 309,000 and the management is recommending to the general assembly the distribution of JD 210,000, or 35 per cent in dividend (Al Aswaq).

Tla' Al Ali new main telephone exchange to start operations in May

☆ THE NEW TLA' AL ALI main telephone exchange will be operational by May 1996 and will provide 33,000 new telephone lines. Telecommunications Corporation Director-General Walid Dweik said telephone lines will be distributed immediately after the exchange becomes operational to many areas covered by the new exchange. This project is within the framework of the Tla' Al Ali communications scheme which, in addition to establishing a 33,000-line main exchange, aims at setting up three electronic auxiliaries at Dabouq (1,200 lines), Bader (900 lines) and Bassah (900 lines). Other communication services will be available in the area covered by the Tla' Al Ali main exchange, Mr. Dweik said (Al Ra'i).

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET				
RISING BANK STOCKS				
TELEPHONE: 407171 / 601171				
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE LIST FOR SATURDAY 10/02/1996				
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES	UP	DOWN	CHANGE
ARAB BANK PSC	780			
ARAB BANK INVESTMENT BANK	3500			
ARAB BANK DEVELOPMENT BANK	280			
THE HOUSING BANK	3535			
JORDAN TRADING BANK	225			
JORDAN GULF BANK	12500			
ARAB JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	10000			
JORDAN SECURITIES BANK	13049			
ARAB BANK FOR INVESTMENT	10000			
ARAB BANK FOR INVESTMENT	2750			
ARAB BANK FOR INVESTMENT	2500			
BANKS SECTOR	58973			
JORDANIAN SEAS INSURANCE	9300			
INSURANCE SECTOR	9300			
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	24994			
JORDANIAN TELECOMUNICATIONS	900			
JORDANIAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	280			
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	1500			
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	1000			
UNITED TRADING EAST & CONSUMERS	600			
ARAB BANK FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	300			
JORDAN PRIVATE UNIVERSITY	1600			
UNIFIED CO. FOR ORGANIZING LAND TRANS.	25800			
UNION LAND DEVELOPMENT CORP.	3500			
SERVICES SECTOR	62644			
THE JORDANIAN CEMENT FACTORIES	6372			
JORDANIAN PROGRESS MINES	4450			
CHK ARAS POTASH	1700			
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	125			
WOLCAN INDUSTRIES	450			
THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	117			
THE JORDANIAN PORTLAND CEMENT	200			
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	2826			
BAFIA INDUSTRIES	200			
DAR AL DINIA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	580			
JORDAN ALUMINUM INDUSTRIES	2350			
LESTER & POULTRY	4173			
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	16900			
NATIONAL INDUSTRIES	250			
TECHNICALS PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	1100			
JORDANIAN BAKING INDUSTRIES	1500			
JORDANIAN SUGAR-REFINING	2500			
ARAB CENTER FOR PETROLEUM & CHEMICALS	862			
UNIVERSAL JORDAN INDUSTRIES	2000			
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	9120			
JORDAN NEW CASES OFFSHORE	4450			
EL RAY READY WEAR MANUFACTURING CO.	24050			
INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	6792			
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	97485			
GRAND TOTAL	226422			

Computer networks create new multimedia market

CANNES, France (R) — The multimedia industry is betting that more and more people will connect their personal computers to telephone lines to create a huge new market of online services on the global Internet.

Hundreds of companies displayed their products for this market of on-screen information, banking and shopping Friday during a five-day Milia annual multimedia show here which will last until Monday.

Created in 1963 by Larry Roberts as a fail-safe electronic messaging system for the U.S. military, the Internet has turned into a world-wide web of computer connections for people to communicate, get information or do transactions.

"1996 will be the year of electronic money," declared Nicholas Negroponte, author of the book "Being Digital," in his opening speech at the show, predicting the arrival of "invisible money" which will scare the world's finance ministries and central banks because they cannot control it.

"The digital revolution is over and we won. Now is the time for the digital society," said Andrew Anker, president and chief executive of multimedia publishers Hot Wired.

Both are Americans and they stunned their European audiences with stories about the speed with which online services are spreading in the United States.

But in Europe, things are hotting up.

Compuserve, a company of leading U.S. tax specialists HR Block, is expanding its operations in Europe by offering more local language content.

"We have 600,000 subscribers in Europe today and we hope to have one million in August," said Andrew Gray, European general manager for Compuserve.

He too believed that electronic transactions would become possible in 1996 and further boost the market.

"The market is growing at 120 per cent per year," he pointed out.

America Online (AOL) Inc, founded in 1985 by Steve Case and now the biggest online company, is rolling out

its services in Germany, Britain and from March 18 also in France with the AOL joint-venture with Bertelsmann of Germany.

"In 1995, the order for online services was first subscriptions, then advertising and lastly transactions. In the next three to five years that order will be reversed," Negroponte said.

Computer companies such as Apple Computers Inc see the Internet as a great opportunity to sell more of their hardware.

"It is over, the battle between Windows and MAC," said Marco Landi, president of Apple Europe. "The platform is the Internet. So the battle now is who is going to provide the easiest access to the different services on the Internet. And this is at the centre of our Strategy."

Milia is in its third year and it has grown rapidly, having 8,000 exhibitors this year.

"We have done in three years with Milia what took us 30 years with (music industry show) Midem," said Xavier Roy, chief executive of organisers Reed Midem.

JORDAN MARKETPLACE

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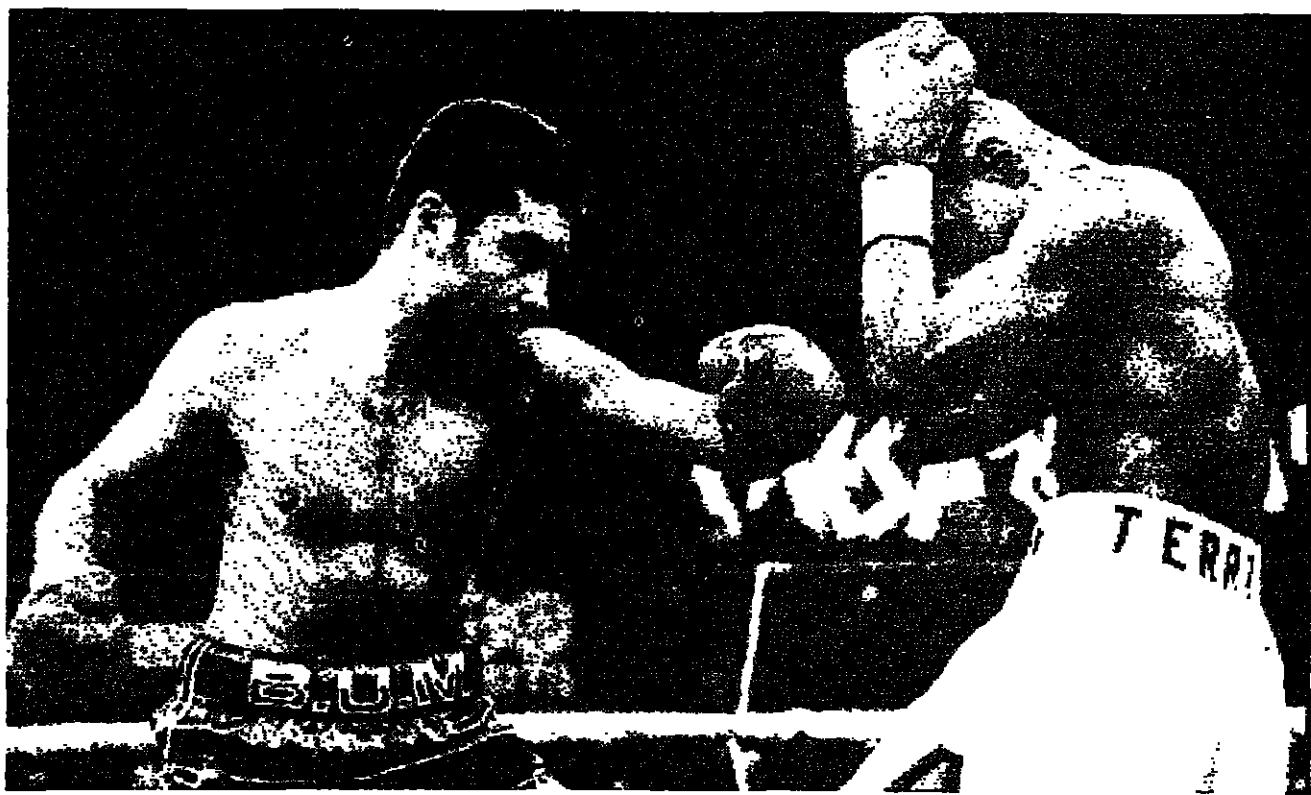
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Currency	Buy	Sell
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U.S. Boxer Oscar de La Hoya moves in on Darryl Tyson (right) during first round action at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas. De La Hoya, WBO lightweight champion, maintained his undefeated record after stopping Tyson in the second round (Reuters photo)

De La Hoya, Chavez to meet June 7

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Oscar de La Hoya led the way, and Julio Cesar Chavez followed with a fight that lasted only six seconds longer. Now they get each other in what may be the most anticipated non-heavyweight fight in nearly a decade.

De La Hoya and Chavez both scored second-round knockouts Friday night in tuneup bouts against outclassed opponents, setting up a June 7 megafight that will make each fighter more than \$9 million.

"I've always dreamed about that fight," De La Hoya said after stopping Darryl Tyson at 2:39 of the second round. "Now my dreams are coming true."

Chavez followed De La Hoya's short work by stopping Scott "Pink Cat" Walker at 2:45 of the second round to fulfill his part of the bargain for the fight at Caesars Palace.

"I'm not afraid of him," Chavez said of De La Hoya. "I can take a punch. I'd like to see if Oscar de La Hoya can hold my punches."

Odds makers immediately made De La Hoya a 3-1 favorite against Chavez, the great Mexican champion who will go into his 100th pro fight with a record of 97-1-1.

"It will be the clash of two warriors going right at it," De La Hoya said. "You might see a great knockout. This fight was made for a knockout."

So were the two fights Friday night, with promoter Bob Arum not risking the big fight by offering either fighter much of an opponent.

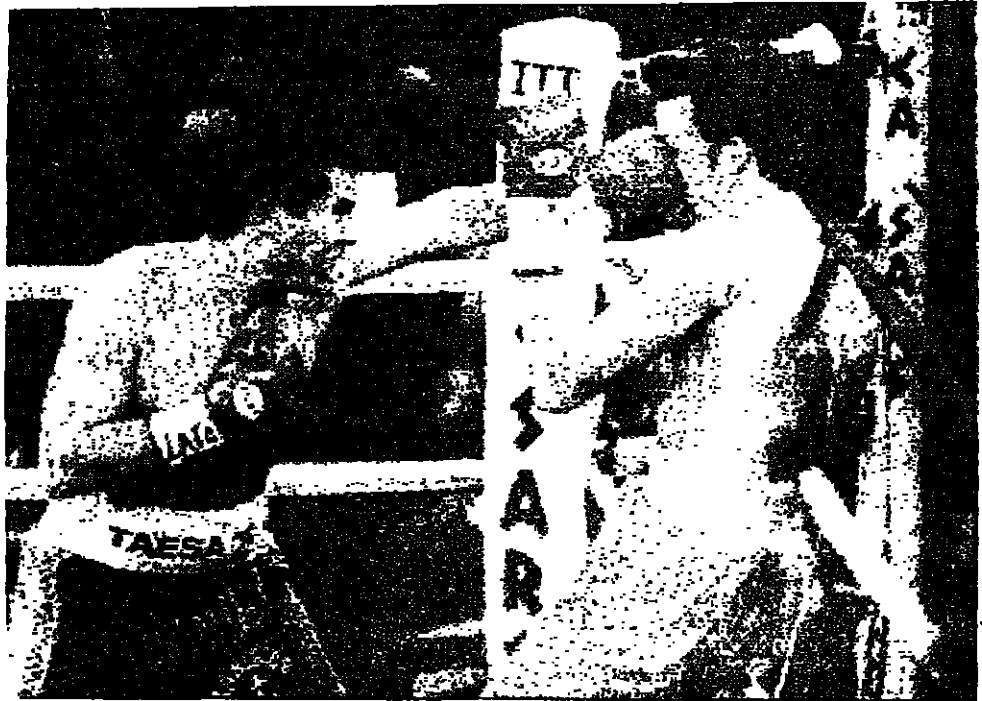
Walker at least tried, actually winning the first round against Chavez on two of the three ringside scorecards. Chavez finally caught him with a right hand midway through the second round that marked the beginning of the end for the pink trunk-clad Walker.

Walker tried desperately to hold on as Chavez battered him around the ring, and referee Joe Cortez finally stepped in to stop the bout after a left hook had Walker sinking against the ropes.

"I was down to take an 8-count," protested Walker, who fell to 21-4-1. "I didn't think they would stop it. I was hurt but I wasn't out on my feet."

Chavez, 144 pounds (65 kilograms), earned \$650,000 for the fight, which he took as an over-the-weight 10-round, non-title bout.

"I knew I had to win this



Julio Cesar Chavez of Mexico connects with a punch to the face of Scott Walker of Arizona in the second round of their bout at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas. The win by Cesar Chavez and one by Oscar de La Hoya sets up their junior welterweight championship showdown in June (Reuters photo)



Heavyweight boxer Mike Tyson chats with other spectators at Caesars Palace during a night of boxing in Las Vegas (Reuters photo)

fight," said Chavez, who will earn the biggest payday of his career against De La Hoya.

With former heavyweight champion Mike Tyson watching at ringside, De La Hoya started cautiously before stopping Darryl Tyson, who is no relation to his more famous heavyweight counterpart.

De La Hoya, a 25-1 favorite, wasted little energy in an economical effort that ended with referee Mitch

Halpern counting to 10 as Tyson waited on one knee in his corner, for the fight to officially end at 2:38 of the round.

"I thought it would be a much tougher fight than it was," De La Hoya said. "When I realized it wasn't, I took him out."

Tyson ended up on the canvas after De La Hoya threw a right to the head, then a left to the body that doubled him up on his knees.

"I knew he was quick but I didn't know he could throw body punches like he did," Tyson said.

It was the 21st win in as many fights for the 1992 Olympic gold medalist, who gave up his who lightweight crown to move up to the 141-pound (63-kilogramme) division.

He dominated from the opening bell against a tentative Tyson, who threw 56 punches but landed only 12 as he tried to stay away from his taller and stronger opponent. De La Hoya landed 57 of the 112 punches he threw.

Owners approve move of Browns to Baltimore

CHICAGO (R) — National Football League owners on Friday overwhelmingly approved the move of the Cleveland Browns to Baltimore for the 1996 season following Thursday's agreement to preserve the Browns' name and colors for a future team in the city of Cleveland.

NFL owners, at their meeting in Chicago, voted 25-2 with three abstentions to Allow Browns' owner Art Modell to move his team. Pittsburgh and Buffalo voted against the move, while Arizona, Oakland and St. Louis — all clubs that have relocated in recent years — abstained.

The NFL and Cleveland mayor Michael White on Thursday reached a deal permitting the Browns to relocate. The agreement calls for either an expansion team or an existing club to be in place in a new stadium in Cleveland by 1999.

The current Browns will begin play in Baltimore next season under a new name with new logo and colors. NFL commissioner Paul Tagliabue and mayor White signed the agreement at a

news conference following the vote.

Tagliabue called the deal, which calls for dropping all legal action against the NFL, Modell and Baltimore, a win-win situation for everybody, while White called for a period of healing and building.

"What has been done has been done and it was now been rectified. We have received our redress," said White, who led the bitter battle to keep the much loved Browns from leaving Cleveland.

"This agreement is not just for city of Cleveland," White continued, "but it is for fans all over this country and around the world who, first of all love football and believe in the traditions of this great game, and second of all believe in and love one of the greatest franchises the world has ever known — and that is the Cleveland Browns."

The NFL agreed to commit between \$28 million and \$48 million towards the building of an open-air stadium on the site presently occupied by ageing Cleveland stadium. The amount of the aid will be

related to the final cost of the stadium, which is expected to be approximately \$225 million.

The stadium, which will also be funded by taxes and the state of Ohio, is expected to seat 72,000 and contain 108 luxury skyboxes.

The league also agreed to reimburse the city for all expenses incurred in its legal battle to retain the Browns. In addition, Modell will pay Cleveland \$9.3 million in damages over the next three years for failing to complete the lease agreement in the old stadium.

Modell, vilified by fans and the media and who received death threats from irate Browns fans for accepting a deal to move the team after nearly 60 years in Cleveland, hinted that he might have stayed were he offered the deal the NFL now has in place with the northern Ohio city.

The deal the mayor and others put together was pretty attractive for anybody, even for me. But that boat has sailed," said Modell after thanking his fellow owners for their votes.

"This has been a very, very tough experience for a lot of people," said Modell, who has owned the Browns since 1961. "Now the final whistle has blown in this ball game and I'm looking forward to a new life, a new era in Baltimore."

Modell offered an olive branch to the people of Cleveland, where a downtown electronic traffic sign has for months been flashing the message "stop Art Modell, save our Browns."

"I leave Cleveland with only the fondest of memories," he said. "There are no greater fans in the world than in Cleveland, Ohio."

"The dawg pound, the season ticket holders, have been part of my life for 35 years. I will miss them..." Modell had no such kind words for the football writers gathered at Friday's news conference.

"I want to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for all the flattering columns you've written about me," said Modell, oozing sarcasm. "It won't be forgotten."

PSG worry about their form

PARIS (R) — Paris St. Germain coach Luis Fernandez, worried after the French League leaders 1-0 defeat in Monaco on Wednesday, called on his players to react when they are at home to Montpellier on Sunday.

The Monaco defeat was only PSG's third loss this season but the Parisians, who hold a six-point lead over second-placed Auxerre, have been mostly lacklustre since the start of 1996.

On Thursday, Fernandez summoned each player individually to discuss the situation. "Since the league resumed after the Christmas break, we have had problems with our game. We are not consistent enough. I wanted to know what the players felt about it," he said.

A defeat against Montpellier could cost PSG dearly since Auxerre, who have a game in hand, and Metz, with two games in hand, are in a position to narrow the gap. Auxerre are at home to Lyon on Saturday while Metz meet in-form Monaco.

The best proof of PSG's uneasiness in 1996 came from the high number of bookings and red cards they have been shown since the beginning of the year.

"We are not fidgety but we are not confident either. It is time we reacted," said defender Laurent Fournier, who was sent off against Monaco.

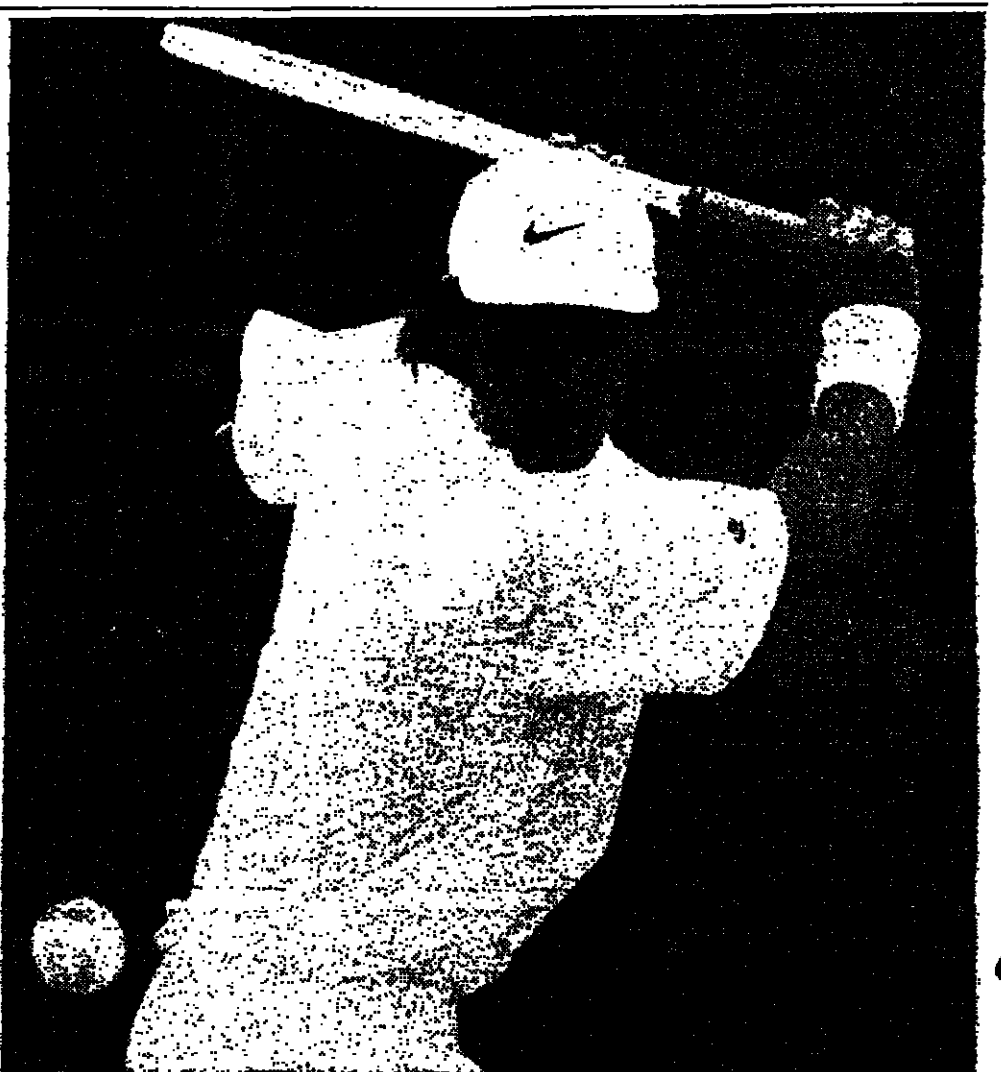
On Sunday, PSG will be without Fournier. Pascal Nouma and Omar Dieng, who are all suspended, the injured Vincent Greire and Brazilian playmaker Rai, who is sick.

Despite PSG's problems, their closest rivals still believe they will win the title at the end of the season.

"We do not play in the same league. With the squad they have, they will soon recover," said Auxerre's French international midfielder Sabri Lamouchi.

Metz captain Sylvain Kastendeuch even said he regretted PSG's defeat to Monaco.

"A draw would have been better for us because the loss means Monaco are coming back fast and will be fully confident against us," he said.



France's Cedric Pioline

German reserves spring a surprise

PARIS (AFP) — Even without top players Boris Becker, Michael Stich and Marc Goellner all sidelined by injury or lack of match play, Germany proved too strong for Switzerland on the first day of the World Group first-round Davis Cup clash in Geneva on Friday.

The Germans, relying on 22-year-old David Prinosil and 21-year-old Hendrick Dreckmann, ended the day holding a surprise 2-0 after both experienced Jakob Hlasek and big-serving Marc Rosset, the players who led Switzerland in the 1993 final, crashed to shock defeats.

Prinosil, currently ranked 44th, got off to a flying start against Hlasek and the 31-year-old Swiss number-two, who was ranked seventh in the world in 1989, needed to save a first match point in a tense third set.

To his credit, however, he fought back superbly and took the third and fourth sets. But his effort came too late and as he tired in the final set he finally surrendered 4-6, 6-7 (4/7), 7-5, 6-4.

1-6.

German jubilation increased when Rosset, the Olympic champion and world number 16, produced one of his worst-ever performances in the competition. Although playing in front of his home Geneva supporters, Rosset, heaped double-faults upon unforced errors and won only eight games against the 11th-ranked Dreckmann.

Other World Group matches largely followed the form book.

In Besancon, France took a 2-0 lead over plucky Denmark when Guy Forget beat Kenneth Carlsen and Cedric Pioline defeated Frederic Fetterlein. Both Frenchmen won in four sets.

And in Katrineholm, hosts Sweden, also took a 2-0 lead over Belgium when Magnus Larsson, serving a score of aces, and Thomas Enqvist saw off Filip Dewulf and Dick Norman without dropping a set.

Only two World Group ties ended the day all square at 1-1.

In Italy, Andres Gaudenzi

recovered after training by two sets to defeat Russian number-two Andrei Chesnokov 2-6, 6-7 (5/7), 7-6 (7/5), 6-3, 6-1, but Yevgeny Kafelnikov denied home hopes by beating Renzo Furlan 6-3, 5-7, 6-4, 6-3.

Davis Cup

And in Johannesburg, Thomas Muster powered Austria into the lead against South Africa with a straight-sets win over Marcos Ondruska before Wayne Ferreira revived home confidence with an equally efficient three-set win over Wolfgang Schranz.

India were trailing 1-0 to the Netherlands in Jaipur when rain halted the first day's second singles. Jacco Eltingh had outplayed Leander Paes in straight-sets when Mahesh Bhupathi threw away a two set lead against the Jan Siemerink. The day ended with the Indian player leading 3-2 in the final set when rain stopped play.

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Both vulnerable, North deals.

NORTH

♠ 10 5
♥ A 6 5 3
♦ A 3 2
♣ A K J 10

WEST

♠ Q 8 7 2
♥ Q J 10 9
♦ 5 2
♣ 8 4

EAST

♠ 7 5 2
♥ 8 6 3
♦ A 9 7 6 3 2

SOUTH

♠ A K J 9 8 4
♥ Void
♦ K Q 10 7 4
♣ Q 5

The bidding:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1NT	Pass	3♠	Pass
3NT	Pass	4♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	5♠	Pass
6♠	Pass	7♠	Pass
Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass

Opening lead: Queen of ♣

When dummy has master trumps, a dummy reversal will often produce an extra trick or two. South's technique on this hand was exemplary.

After North's no-trump opening, South showed both suits. North's four hearts was a cue-bid agreeing diamonds, and thereafter both players cue-bid their controls. South went straight to the grand slam once the ace and king of clubs were located.

Declarer won the first trick with the ace, discarding a spade from hand, and immediately ruffed a heart. Two rounds of trumps were drawn, ending in dummy. Had either defender failed to follow, declarer would have resorted to a 3-2 spade division and set up the suit with a ruff. But once trumps broke reasonably, a better line was available. Declarer ruffed a heart, crossed to the ten of clubs and trumped dummy's last heart. The queen of clubs was overtaken and the last trump was drawn. The final four tricks were taken by the two high clubs in dummy and the two master spades in the closed hand.

In all, declarer scored three trump tricks, one heart and three heart ruffs, two spade tricks and four clubs — just enough to fulfill the grand slam.

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NATO tightens security; contacts with Serbs go on

SARAJEVO (R) — NATO said on Saturday it was stepping up security because of tension with the Bosnian Serb army, but insisted it was not on the defensive and was maintaining some contacts with the Serbs.

Bosnian Serb army commander General Ratko Mladic said two days ago his forces were severing relations with the 60,000-strong NATO mission because the Bosnian government was refusing to release eight Serbs arrested on suspicion of war crimes.

"We always have contingency plans to increase our self-protection posture," said Captain Leonard Capello, a NATO senior operations officer in Sarajevo.

"Whenever there's any indication that the threat may increase then we will take measures to prevent people from being overexposed. I think we're doing that. We're not circling the wagons... we're trying to meet (the Serb army) and progress."

In a press statement on Saturday, the Bosnian Serb army demanded the immediate release of the detained men — who include a general and a colonel — but did not say what action it might take if this did not occur.

Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Walker, the commander of NATO ground forces in Bosnia, on Friday

called Gen. Mladic's announcement ominous.

NATO sources said plans to increase the security of its soldiers, aid workers and facilities across Bosnia were in effect to protect against possible Serb hostage-taking or sabotage.

The sources said no specific threat had been identified and that the heightened security was precautionary.

"We have the capacity to monitor any implied or direct threats against us," said NATO spokesman Colonel John Kirkwood.

"We won't go into the details of how we do that, (but) we react accordingly. We've got enough material and people in country to react very quickly, very decisively."

NATO has not reported any contacts with the senior level of the Bosnian Serb army since Gen. Mladic made his statement.

Gen. Mladic is not recognised by NATO since he has been indicted by a U.N. tribunal as a war criminal and is ineligible to hold a public position under the terms of the Dayton peace accord.

The Serbs on Friday missed one division-level meeting which had been scheduled between them and NATO officers in northeast Bosnia, but elsewhere working relationships were continuing.

The crisis over the detained Serb soldiers will bring

U.S. envoy Richard Holbrooke — architect of the Bosnia peace accord brokered in Dayton, Ohio and signed in Paris in December — on an unscheduled visit back to the region on Sunday.

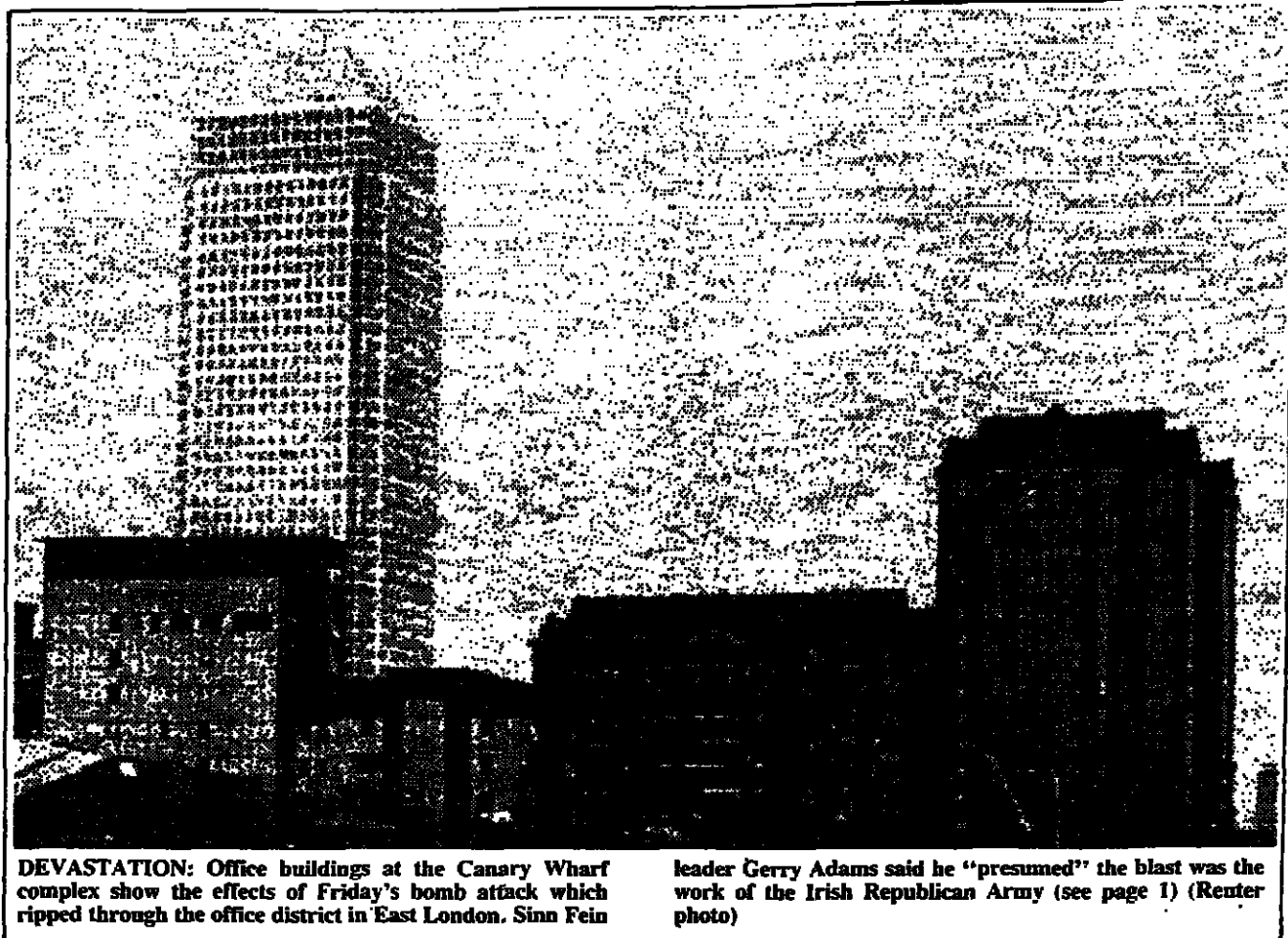
The tough-talking Holbrooke will visit Sarajevo, Zagreb and Belgrade to deliver a stern warning to Balkan leaders to defuse the crisis and abide by the Bosnian peace pact or face unspecified consequences.

In northwest Bosnia, 97 Serb engineers began clearing minefields under NATO supervision at the weekend from an area which reverted to Serb control under the peace agreement.

Amid the mixed messages from the Serb side, NATO took encouragement from a radio statement by Bosnian Serb Prime Minister Rajko Kasagic on Friday in which he vowed to maintain his contacts with NATO and Carl Bildt, the international community's top mediator in Bosnia.

"It seems to be that the political side is mitigating the military side," said Colonel Kirkwood.

"There were conciliatory remarks last night on the political side. We're receiving mixed messages at the unit level. It's spotty but we're continuing on with the job."



DEVASTATION: Office buildings at the Canary Wharf complex show the effects of Friday's bomb attack which ripped through the office district in East London. Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams said he "presumed" the blast was the work of the Irish Republican Army (see page 1) (Renter photo)

\$300 million IMF credit for Jordan seen as vote of confidence on Kingdom's economy

By P. V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The approval by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) of a Jordanian request for nearly \$300 million in credits over three years is seen as a reaffirmation of the world body's support for and confidence in the Kingdom's economic restructuring programme.

While expressing confidence in Jordan attaining the targets of the reform programme through a series of consistent economic measures, the IMF said that "timely external assistance on appropriate terms" were very important to support the programme and build the country's foreign exchange reserves.

The IMF credit is being granted under what the world body describes as extended fund facility (EFF), which is designed to support medium-term economic programmes aimed at overcoming structural balance of payment problems.

The programme normally lasts for three years, but could be extended for another year. Jordan received about \$180 million in EFF credits for the period ending 1995. The Kingdom's total outstanding use of IMF credit now stands at 169 million special drawing rights, or about \$248 million.

Amman is a chief sponsor of a wave of such attacks that plagued Israel in recent years in an effort to halt the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) peace process.

"The borders of Palestine are drawn in Ayyash's blood," and "Ayyash's disciples will continue in his way until the liberation of Jerusalem," read placards carried by supporters.

Hamas has blamed Israel for the killing of Ayyash and its leaders have warned their movement would avenge his death in further attacks against Israel.

On Saturday, leaders lashed out at PLO Chief Yasser Arafat, saying he had surrendered to Israel when he signed a peace pact with Israel. Mr. Arafat further angered opposition groups when he visited the widow of slain Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who was gunned down by an extremist Jew after a Nov. 4 peace rally.

"The one who told Leah Rabin in a special visit that we are family has surrendered," said Hamas leader Jamal Mansour Saturday, referring to Mr. Arafat.

Mr. Mansour said the Palestinian National Authority had driven heroes to die as martyrs.

At least one man was draped in a white cloth, symbolising his willingness to die as a martyr. Before his death Ayyash had recruited a small following willing to die in suicide attacks against Israel.

Israel has banned Israeli vehicles from entering Nablus for security reasons from Saturday, an Israeli army spokesman said.

"The city of Nablus will be closed for Israeli traffic starting from Saturday," February 10 at 0600 a.m. (0400 GMT) due to security reasons," he said.

On Friday Israel imposed temporary restrictions on the entrance of Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank.

Jordan's so-called quota in the IMF is 121.7 million special drawing rights (about \$179 million). The quota determined the amount of its subscription, voting weight and access to IMF financing. However, the Kingdom has often enjoyed larger credit facilities from the IMF than are determined by the quota figure.

The approval of Jordan's request for an additional 200.8 million special drawing rights (about \$295 million) came Friday after an IMF mission presented a recommendation along with a draft memorandum of understanding under which Jordan set out of a series of measures designed to meet the targets set in the economic restructuring programme.

In broad terms, the programme aims at sustaining annual economic growth as around six per cent in real terms, maintaining inflation at less than four per cent, narrowing external current account deficit to below three per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) on average and building gross official foreign exchange reserves to the equivalent of three months of imports.

An IMF press release noted that Jordan's economic growth was around six per cent in 1994-95, inflation remained within the

three to 3.5 per cent range, and the deficit in the external current account declined by seven percentage points.

It said these figures reflected a positive response by the economy to the "comprehensive programme of macroeconomic adjustment and reform" launched in 1994.

"To build on the 1994-95 achievements and to benefit from the opportunities from the peace process, the integration with the European Union, and the future changes in the world economy, the Jordanian authorities have formulated an intensified programme of macroeconomic adjustment and structural reforms for 1996-99 supported by the new EFF credits," said the IMF.

It noted that Jordanian fiscal policy seeks to reduce the budget deficit (before external grants and proceeds from sale of assets abroad) to 2.5 per cent of the GDP by the year 1998 from 4.8 per cent in 1995. The actual performance and target figures are, by all international standards, highly impressive, given that the comparable figure for 24 per cent in 1989, when Jordan first launched sweeping economic reforms.

The IMF acknowledged that the Jordanian govern-

ment was committed to "a tight monetary policy and flexible interest rates geared to maintaining the relative attractiveness of dinar-denominated assets."

One of the regular tools employed by the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) to maintain the attraction of holdings in dinar is certificates of deposits (CDs) offering a minimum of two per cent margin in interest over American dollars. The regular issuance of CDs has largely managed to keep an indirect rein on conversion of dinars into foreign currency that yields less.

The IMF acknowledged that the Jordanian government was also committed to "a significant acceleration of broad-ranging structural reforms, including the areas of taxes, budgetary expenditures, the regulatory framework, the financial system, and the trade system."

It noted that medium-term measures will also tackle food subsidies and reform of food subsidies and reform of the civil service and the pension system.

In the area of food subsidies, Jordan, in the past four years, introduced a coupon system that seeks to ensure that only the needy benefit from state

(Continued on page 7)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Libya 'talking with France over bombing'

TUNIS (R) — Libya is discussing with France a solution for the dispute over four Libyans suspected in the 1989 bombing of a French airliner that killed 171 people. Libya's Foreign Minister Omar Mustafa Al Montasser said on Saturday. "There is a continuous debate to reach a solution and an agreement to solve this issue," Mr. Montasser said. "Cooperation is going on with the French magistrate... and several meetings were held between the two French and Libyan magistrates in charge of this affair."

Cyprus coast hit by two quakes

NICOSIA (Agencies) — Two earthquakes registering 4 and 3.5 on the Richter scale hit off the western coast of Cyprus in 24 hours, senior seismological Kyriakos Solomis said Saturday. He told state radio that the two tremors were centered in the sea 25 kilometres west of the southwestern resort of Paphos where the quakes were felt but caused no damage. In March, an earthquake registering 6.1 killed two people and caused large-scale damage in old villages in the same area.

Libya jails officers of coup attempt

CAIRO (AP) — A Libyan military court has sentenced to death 12 military officers for attempting to oust Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi in 1993, a newspaper reported Saturday. Police had arrested the officers along with dozens of others just west of the Libyan capital of Tripoli in 1993, shortly before they were to carry out the coup. The London-based Arabic newspaper Al Hayat said the Libyan government was dissatisfied with an earlier trial that sentenced the officers to between 10 years to life in prison, and ordered a retrial. The retrial started in December of last year.

Sheikh Sabah meets Iraqi tribe leader

KUWAIT (AP) — Hojatoleslam Mohammad Baqr Al Hakim, leader of Iraq's main Shiite Muslim opposition movement, arrived Saturday and met with Kuwait's foreign minister, Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah. The official Kuwait News Agency did not give a reason for the visit of the exiled middle-ranking cleric. But Sheikh Hakim has been seeking Kuwait's "political support" for the opposition's efforts to topple Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. Sheikh Hakim heads the Tehran-based Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq.

Somali clan leaders deny defection

MOGADISHU (R) — Two senior Somali Abgal clan politicians denied on Saturday they had defected to faction leader Mohammed Farah Aidede's government as reported by his radio station. Abdul Rahman Gabow Mohammed and Hassan Abdulle Goley both told a news conference in north Mogadishu, outside General Aidede's control, they knew nothing about being appointed deputy president and Mogadishu governor respectively as said by the radio on Friday. "We're neutral and we want to keep our neutrality among the warring factions of Somalia," said Mr. Mohammed, who added they were members of a group set up last month by opponents of Gen. Aidede's arch-enemy Ali Mahdi Mohammed, whose base is north Mogadishu.

Israeli Arab groups join forces to fight elections

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Two Israeli Arab political groups have agreed to form a common front for general elections in the Jewish state, which could be held as early as May, state radio reported Saturday. The Arab Movement for Change headed by Ahmad Tibi, an advisor to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, and the Progressive List for Peace have signed an agreement to present a joint list of the polls. Dr. Tibi's group is a newcomer to the Israeli political scene, but the Progressive List was represented in parliament or Knesset between 1984 and 1992. Israeli Arabs are currently represented in the Knesset by the Arab Democratic Party, which has two deputies and the Hadash party, which has three seats.

U.S. holds economic talks with Syria

WASHINGTON (AFP) — A top U.S. official has travelled to Syria to hold talks on economic issues within the context of Israeli-Syrian peace negotiations, the State Department said Friday. U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Toni Verstandig was in Damascus to talk "about how the economic issues play back into a possible eventual peace between Syria and Israel," spokesman Glyn Davies said. Mr. Davies said Mr. Verstandig had accompanied Secretary of State Warren Christopher on his trip to the region earlier this week and had stayed on in Damascus.

Hamas hails Ayyash

NABLUS (Agencies) —

Thousands of Palestinian supporters of the militant group Hamas rallied in this West Bank town Saturday in memory of the group's chief bombmaker Yahya Ayyash, who was killed by a rigged cellular phone 40 days ago.

Some 5,000 Hamas supporters gathered in the courtyard of Al Najah University in Nablus, shouting "We are all Ayyash," as several men carried a mock coffin, automatic weapons strung across their shoulders.

Ayyash, who was nicknamed "the engineer" after orchestrating several deadly bombings against Israel, was killed in the Gaza Strip Jan. 5 when the cellular phone he was using exploded.

Ayyash was believed to be responsible for at least seven bombing attacks against Israel that killed some 55 people and wounded hundreds more.

Hamas is a chief sponsor of a wave of such attacks that plagued Israel in recent years in an effort to halt the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) peace process.

"The borders of Palestine are drawn in Ayyash's blood," and "Ayyash's disciples will continue in his way until the liberation of Jerusalem," read placards carried by supporters.

Hamas has blamed Israel for the killing of Ayyash and its leaders have warned their movement would avenge his death in further attacks against Israel.

On Saturday, leaders lashed out at PLO Chief Yasser Arafat, saying he had surrendered to Israel when he signed a peace pact with Israel. Mr. Arafat further angered opposition groups when he visited the widow of slain Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who was gunned down by an extremist Jew after a Nov. 4 peace rally.

"The one who told Leah Rabin in a special visit that we are family has surrendered," said Hamas leader Jamal Mansour Saturday, referring to Mr. Arafat.

Mr. Mansour said the Palestinian National Authority had driven heroes to die as martyrs.

At least one man was draped in a white cloth, symbolising his willingness to die as a martyr. Before his death Ayyash had recruited a small following willing to die in suicide attacks against Israel.

Israel has banned Israeli vehicles from entering Nablus for security reasons from Saturday, an Israeli army spokesman said.

"The city of Nablus will be closed for Israeli traffic starting from Saturday," February 10 at 0600 a.m. (0400 GMT) due to security reasons," he said.

On Friday Israel imposed temporary restrictions on the entrance of Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank.

No coalition plan with Islamists — Yilmaz aide

ISTANBUL (AFP) — A

leading official from the Motherland Party of Turkish Prime Minister-designate Mesut Yilmaz said Saturday that a coalition between his group and the Islamists was unlikely due to serious political differences.

"Mr. (Necmettin) Erbakan (leader of the pro-Islamist Welfare Party) has again taken up radical rhetoric, which makes cooperation with us unlikely," the Motherland's deputy chairman, Avni Akyol, told reporters here.

He was commenting on press reports of recent Erbakan remarks praising the Islamic revolution in Iran and plans to introduce an "Islamic dinar" to be used in all Islamic countries.

Mr. Yilmaz, whose talks with another right-wing leader, caretaker Prime Minister

Tansu Ciller, for a coalition failed last week, is expected to meet Mr. Erbakan Monday "for consultations" regarding the country's long-lasting government crisis.

"We don't expect a decision for an alliance with the Welfare at the Yilmaz-Erbakan meeting," Mr. Akyol said.

Mr. Yilmaz was the only leader who had not ruled out a coalition government with the Islamists. However, Mr. Erbakan's recent remarks discouraged Motherland officials regarding an alliance with the Welfare.

According to Turkish press reports, Mr. Erbakan told Iranian diplomats in Ankara at a meeting last week that he admired the Islamic revolution in Iran, adding he also wished an Islamist regime would come to power in Turkey.

Iran: Human rights is a Western weapon

TEHRAN (R) — A senior

Iranian official on Saturday told a visiting United Nations human rights envoy that human rights issues were being used by Western countries to pressurise Iran. Tehran Radio said.

"Numerous factors have led the Iranian people to not be optimistic about this (U.N. Human Rights) Commission's work, as human rights have gradually become a tool of great powers to put pressure on specific countries," Deputy Speaker of Parliament Hassan Rowhani was quoted by the state-run radio as saying.

Mr. Rowhani, a Shi'ite Muslim cleric, made the re-

marks to Maurice Danby Copithorne, the commission's special representative on Iran, who arrived in Tehran on Saturday on a six-day mission.

"One can clearly see the double standards of international bodies in numerous cases... (including) blatant U.S. interference in the affairs of various states, especially Iran," said Mr. Rowhani, also secretary of Iran's National Security Council.

"International bodies show no reaction to these interferences," Mr. Rowhani said, in reference to reported moves in the U.S. Congress to set up a fund for covert action against Iran.

Sudan on hunt for 3 fugitives

KHARTOUM (AFP) —

Sudan has launched a nationwide manhunt for three militants in a bid to appease United Nations demands and ward off increasing international isolation.

"This was a last resort. We made a plea for the help of the public because our intense police efforts have not found a trace of the fugitives," State Prosecutor Abdel Rahman Ibrahim Al Khalifa told AFP on Saturday.

Mr. Khalifa made the appeal on Friday, calling on the Sudanese population to "help authorities in their search" for the three Egyptian militants.

In a statement carried by the official news agency SUNA and addressed to the fugitives, he warned that a warrant was out for their arrest, saying, "you are wanted for justice under order by the Ethiopian courts."

"Since you were not found in Ethiopia and were believed to have crossed the border into Sudan, I order you to surrender yourself to the nearest police station within a week," he said.

The call came 10 days after the U.N. Security Council demanded that Sudan hand over the militants to Ethiopia within 60 days, and some members have suggested sanctions if Khartoum did not comply.

Mr. Khalifa underlined on Saturday Sudan's cooperation, saying "a public appeal is beyond what is required by extradition agreements" with Ethiopia.

His appeal included descriptions, passport numbers and aliases used by the three who Ethiopia accuses Sudan of harbouring after they plotted a bid to assassinate Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on June 26 in Addis Ababa.

The U.N. announced Friday that it would send special envoy Chinnaya Gharekhan to Sudan to follow up its implementation of the resolution.

The U.N. secretary general is to present a report on Sudan's cooperation at the end of the 60-day period in early April.

Mr. Gharekhan, who will also pass through Addis Ababa, will discuss "how to deal with terrorism in the region," the U.N. said.

The resolution also called on Sudan to "desist from engaging in assisting, supporting and facilitating terrorist activities and from giving sanctuary to terrorist elements."

The U.N. resolution capped the increasing isolation of Sudan's government, which has strained relations with almost all its immediate neighbours and is on the United States' list of countries supporting terrorism.

The U.S. has cleared all its diplomats from Sudan, demanding that Khartoum rein in "terrorist groups" on its soil.

Cairo, which presented the resolution to the Security Council along with the other non-aligned members, ac-

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COLUMN

Le Pen backs Zhirinovskiy for president

MOSCOW (AFP) — Ultra-nationalist Russian politician Vladimir Zhirinovskiy has the backing of France's extreme-right leader Jean-Marie Le Pen for the June presidential elections. "I want it for Russia," Mr. Le Pen said here Friday when he arrived to attend Mr. Zhirinovskiy's wedding. "I am confident that that he can resolve all Russia's problems," Mr. Zhirinovskiy is to have a church wedding here Sunday with his wife Galina, 25 years after the couple were married in a Soviet civil ceremony. Mr. Le Pen said he had known Mr. Zhirinovskiy for several years, considered him a friend, and had many points in common with him. He was glad to see him celebrate a religious marriage, "which has an important moral and political significance." Asked about Mr. Zhirinovskiy's behaviour, including brawling in parliament and making extreme statements, Mr. Le Pen said, "I don't think his ideas are particularly excessive." He added, "we are in a country that is not used to democratic debate, so the change can be a bit brutal."

Chinese woman gives birth to quadruplets

BEIJING (R) — A peasant woman in China's north-eastern Heilongjiang province has given birth to quadruplets — two boys and two girls, the China Women's Daily said Saturday. It said Sun Yamei, 28, was admitted to the hospital in her 26th week of pregnancy after tests revealed she was carrying quadruplets. The infants, delivered by caesarean section in the 38th week at the Mudanjiang Municipal Obstetrics Hospital, were in good health. The two boys tipped the scales at 3.2 kilograms (7 lbs) and 3.0 kilograms (6.6 lbs) and the girls weighed in at 2.8 kilograms (6.2 lbs) and 2.4 kilograms (5.3 lbs), the newspaper said.

Voltaire's chateau for sale

FERNEY-VOLTAIRE (AFP) — The chateau of 18th century French philosopher Voltaire, near the Swiss border, has been put up for sale by the family that has owned it since 1847, municipal officials said. After travelling throughout Europe, Voltaire, aged 65, bought the chateau from the Count of Bude for 89,000 pounds, the currency of the time, on Feb. 9, 1759. The building, a classified historical monument, is worth an estimated 30 million francs (\$6 million). Voltaire lived there until Feb. 5, 1778, when he left for Paris where he died three months later. During the 20 years he spent at Ferney, Voltaire was simultaneously a justice of the peace, an architect, a farmer and a banker. Under his influence the population of the village increased from 100 to 700. It was from Ferney that Voltaire published his novel Candide and his philosophical dictionary.

Hoxha's books to be pulped

TIRANA (AFP) — Some 200,000 copies of the works of former Communist dictator Enver Hoxha are to be pulped, the Culture Ministry has decided. The books, required reading in the days of the dictatorship, are taking up space in the warehouses of 26 book distribution companies. The ministry said they would all be brought to a central depot and transformed into cardboard.